

Hafa Adai!

UFO stages another successful 'Paskong Pinoy.' **PAGE 2**
Three more NMC graduates pass NCLEX. **PAGE 3**

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\$1



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HANMI, CHAMBER TO CNMI LEADERS

'Back EVS-TAP visa program'

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Tourist go through security at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport before they board their flights.

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce and Hotel Association of the Northern

Mariana Islands are urging the CNMI's leaders to back the creation and implementation of a proposed visa program as a subprogram of the

See VISA on Page 4



Chamber: Economy is falling fast

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI economy is falling into darkness so fast that there is a need to act quickly to get back Chinese tourists and revitalize the tourism industry, according to Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) yesterday.

In a meeting with officers of the NMI in the Senate chamber, DeLeon Guerrero

» **Palacios organizing 902 consultation team**



FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Society for Human Resources Management vice president Roman Tudela Jr. talks about the challenges of their members during a meeting yesterday afternoon with the Senate as, from right to left, Hotel of Association of the NMI board chair Dennis Seo, Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Joe Guerrero, and Saipan Chamber of Commerce board vice president Joshua Wise listen.



House PUTC tables bill to mandate CUC to change rates for CHCC

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The House of Representatives Committee on Public

Utilities, Transportation, and Communications has decided to suspend consideration of a Senate bill that would

See HOUSE on Page 4

Creditors seek over \$5M against IPI's personal property

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

More of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's creditors have banded together in an effort to get their unsatisfied judgments settled by

filing a joint writ of execution against the casino investor's property. In total, these creditors seek to satisfy judgments amounting to over \$5 million.

Last week, IPI judgment creditors U.S.A. Fanter Corp., Ltd., Fujitec Pacific Inc.,

Hemine Ipwan Islam dba IPWAN Security Services, GT Building Systems International Ptd., Ltd., Artman Corp., and James Whang dba South Pacific Lumber Co., through attorney Colin Thompson,

See CREDITORS on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS

RJ Pizza Restaurant has opened at the old LBC Express Inc. location in Garapan.

PAGE 11



WORLD

Nealy 600 Russian shells, rockets, and other projectiles rained down on a southern region of Ukraine and unidentified hackers knocked out phone and internet services of the country's biggest telecom provider.

PAGE 13



LIFE & STYLE

Fourteen years ago, Tony Shalhoub said goodbye to one of his most beloved creations—the obsessive-compulsive private detective Adrian Monk.

PAGE 15



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Local

UFO stages another successful 'Paskong Pinoy'

The traditional Filipino Christmas celebration, "Paskong Pinoy," last Sunday at the Marianas Business Plaza's parking grounds in Susupe, provided a whole day of fun-filled activities that highlighted the Filipino community's Christmas celebration in the CNMI.

Ruel Nava won first place in the on-the-spot lantern making contest, followed by Extreme 670, who won second place,

and Carlito Pabilando Jr., who won third place.

In the Christmas caroling contest, the Green Meadow School Falcons won by default, while Extreme Fitness 670 won the adult dance contest, also by default.

The highlight of "Pistang Pinoy" was the Kwarta o Kahon game show, where contestants had to individually guess and choose a lucky box,

whether it contains cash or in-kind prize. After the elimination round, only one contestant was able to play, Annabelle Lopena. She did not win the \$500 jackpot but got the gift certificate worth \$50 from Jet Holding Co. The event's organizer, United Filipino Organizations, decided to raffle the jackpot into \$50 each for 10 lucky winners and the rest of the prizes inside the boxes.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Last Sunday's "Paskong Pinoy" drawing contest winners pose with UFO officers led by acting president Mario Mayuga, fourth from left.

The event's performers and entertainers included Erma Tubera, Princess Nicole Riguia, Roanne Palma, Precy Villafuerte, Villy Pineda, Juliana Kai Ortiz, Angelee Agdoro, Groove Theory, Unshakable Band, GCA Tambourine Group, Shane Sabino, Donnel Isip, Ronilo de Belen, Elmer Belgado, Hapi D'Clown, Fitbeat Familia, Saipan Ballroom Dancers with ZIN JoApple, Sessionista Band, and Micronesian Cultural Club.

The event last Dec. 10, 2023, lasted from 11am to 7pm, beginning with an invocation from Bishop Ryan Jimenez, followed by Lawrence and Justin Tubera singing the Philippine, U.S., and CNMI national anthems.

Acting UFO president Mario Mayuga thanked the sponsors and volunteers for their support. The major sponsors were the TSL Foundation, RNV Construction, and ITE. The rest of the sponsors were Ace Hardware, Athletes Foot, Atkins Kroll Toyota, Auto Marine Inc., Bayani Association, BL Machine Shop, Blossoms Floral Depot, Cargo Express, Celnaps, Century Insurance, Chowtime Restau-

rant, Coca-Cola, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Hardt Eye Clinic, JG Sablan Water Co., JET Holding Co., Joeten Motor Company, KL Carr, L&M Enterprises, McDonald's, Marianas Business Plaza, Micronesian Renewable Energy, Natural Nail & Spa, Saipan Ice & Water Co., Saipan Stevedore, Saipan World Resort, Star Water, Tokyo Café, Westco, and Saipan Cubs Alpha Leo Club.

The vendors at the event were Canto 10, Champs Shave Ice, Connie's BBQ & Catering, JTM Corp., Chelo Shave Ice, Chelo Retail, Tres Marias, and Café Meraki.

UFO is the umbrella group of nine organizations: Bayani Association; Bicol Association; Marianas Association of Filipino Engineers and Architects, or MAFEA; Marianas Institute of Filipino CPA's & Accountants, or MIFCPA; MDX Radio Group; Northern Marianas Bartenders Association, or NMBA; Saipan Building & Fixing Computers User Group; Sto. Nino Group; and Tau Gamma Phi Treskelion.

The event was hosted by Annamae Adaza and RV Caberos. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Acting UFO president Mario Mayuga, third from left, hands on-the-spot lantern making contest first place winner Ruel Nava his prize while second placer Extreme 670 and third placer Carlito Pabilando Jr. look on during last Sunday's "Paskong Pinoy" celebration at the Marianas Business Plaza.

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Three more NMC graduates pass NCLEX

Northern Marianas College nursing graduates Quina Viana, Alyanna Garon, and Redz Nissi Rivera have joined the long list of NMC students who have passed the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses or NCLEX-RN.

Nursing graduates must pass the NCLEX-RN to be able to practice nursing in the United States. The exam tests the knowledge, skills, and



Garon

Rivera

abilities of nursing graduates in order to certify that they are capable of applying entry-level nursing practices correctly.

"I would like to congratulate Quina, Alyanna, and Redz on becoming the latest graduates to pass the NCLEX," said NMC president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero. "We wish the best of luck to them in their future endeavors as healthcare professionals."

NMC Nursing Department chair Rosa Aldan likewise congratulated the three on their achievements.

"We are extremely proud of these graduates' accomplishment in passing the NCLEX-RN Exam," Aldan said. "The Nursing Team and I are excited for them to start their nursing careers and cannot wait to hear more of their future accomplishments."

Viana, a 2022 NMC nursing graduate, pursued nursing as the profession is "more than just helping people."

"Caring, connecting, and advocating for them is a rewarding career. At the same time, it offers diverse career opportunities and job stability," Viana said.

Viana attributed her handling the NCLEX to her support system and her instructors. "I couldn't have done this without the support of my family and friends. I also want to thank my instructors, who have been encouraging and supportive of our success."

She added, "We have our nursing instructors who guided and supported us since Day 1. They have exceptionally shared their knowledge and experiences and supported our success."

Viana initially worked as a graduate nurse at CHCC and is now working there as a registered nurse.

Garon, a classmate of Viana, looked to her parents as her motivation to pursue nursing. "My motivation for

pursuing a nursing degree was my parents. They gave up so much for my brothers and I, to be able to live a life that was

comfortable and happy, I wanted to make them proud and be able to give back to them in the future," Garon said.

When preparing for the NCLEX, Garon mentions the help of the college in preparing.

See NCLEX on Page 4

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23HS036	2019	KIA SEDONA	\$17,995	\$142
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22H275A	2019	HONDA CR-V	\$22,995	\$159
22P003	2017	NISSAN FRONTIER	\$23,995	\$170
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Local bill allocates \$503,900 for Obyan Beach repair

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_deletorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has

signed into law a local bill that would re-appropriate \$503,900 for the reconstruction and repair of Oby-

an Beach. House Local Bill 23-25 is now Saipan Local Law 23-09.

The bill, authored by Rep.

Roman C. Benavente (Ind-Saipan), would re-appropriate \$204,500 allotted under Saipan Local Law 20-26; \$190,000

allotted under Saipan Local Law 20-26; and \$109,400 allotted under Saipan Local Law 21-07. Finance Secretary Tra-

cy B. Norita has certified that those funds are available for appropriation.

The Department of Public Works secretary shall be the expenditure authority for the \$503,900.

Saipan Community Church to hold Christmas Feast this Sunday

Saipan Community Church will hold its annual Christmas Feast this Sunday, Dec. 17.

The feast starts at 5pm and the Christmas program,

featuring Saipan Community School students, San Vicente Glee Club, and other entertaining performances, begins at 9pm.

SCC pastor Stephen Dame is inviting the community to join the Susupe church in celebrating the holidays this coming Sunday.

"The Christmas Feast is our way of giving back to our community. It's been an annual event since the 1970s. We just want to share

CHAMBER

From page 1

said it is quite urgent to organize a team for 902 consultations with the Biden administration to discuss the issues the CNMI is facing with the economy, the lack of airlines, lack of tourists and other pressing issues.

In line with this, DeLeon Guerrero disclosed that Gov. Arnold I. Palacios is organizing a 902 consultation for some time in January 2024. The 902 consultation is a provision in the CNMI's Covenant agreement with the United States where they will consult on pressing matters af-

flecting the CNMI.

Deleon Guerrero is hopeful that whoever the Commonwealth sends to Washington, D.C. for the 902 talks "will be able to articulate the issues that are facing the Commonwealth and that we could find a solution hopefully that would address the needs of our economy so that we can all survive what we are facing today," she said.

She also believes it is quite critical that if the U.S. Department of Homeland Security revokes the discretionary parole program, DHS should also implement at the same time, if not sooner, the CNMI-Economic Vitality & Security Travel Authorization

Program as its substitute.

The discretionary parole program allows Chinese tourists to enter the CNMI without a tourist visa. EVS-TAP will allow prescreened nationals of the People's Republic of China to travel to the CNMI without a visa under specific conditions.

"I think that's the ultimate direct solution right now, as we speak with the urgency of what we are facing today here in the Commonwealth," DeLeon Guerrero said.

She cited a Commonwealth Ports Authority letter to the U.S. Department of Transportation that shows data provided by the CNMI Department of Commerce and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, which

showed that the CNMI was reporting 185,526 tourists coming to the Commonwealth.

DeLeon Guerrero said the direct economic impact of that is \$126.4 million, while the indirect economic impact is \$204.7 million. She said the total economic impact is \$331.2 million.

"That is way beyond what this government produces on its normal economy. This is serious. We are in dire straits," the Senate president said. "This is the ripple effect of a dead economy. The ripple effect of the loss of the market."

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

HOUSE

From page 1

mandate the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to change the power, water, and wastewater rates of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. from government to commercial.

Committee chair Rep. Vincent S. Aldan (Ind-Saipan) said during their meeting Tuesday that, instead of trying to do anything with Sen-

ate Bill 23-37, Senate Draft 1, they will just table it and try to get the Senate to act on House Bill 23-59, House Substitute 1 instead.

That bill, which Aldan introduced, seeks to transition all governmental electric rates to commercial rates. The bill broadens the scope to encompass all utilities: water, wastewater, and electricity.

Under House Bill 23-59, House Substitute 1, the exist-

ing governmental utility rate overseen by CUC will be discontinued and replaced with commercial rates.

During the discussions on the Senate version, Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan) noted that House Bill 23-59 is in the Senate and that will take care of the hospital, moving forward.

Attao said he is not saying that CHCC shouldn't abide with the payment plan they previously negotiated with

CUC. "The thing that I know is we need to reduce the rate," he added.

The utilities of all government buildings are currently being charged at a government rate, which is more expensive. Charging them the commercial rate is seen as a way to lower the government's utility bills.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

VISA

From page 1

Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver program.

In a joint letter addressed to CNMI leaders yesterday, both business organizations said the proposed CNMI Economic Vitality & Security Travel Authorization Program, or EVS-TAP, will address concerns about the discretionary parole program that do not hinder the CNMI's economic growth.

The Chamber and HANMI joint letter was addressed to Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan (D-MP), Senate President Edith Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan) and members of the CNMI Senate, and House Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) and members of the House of Representatives, among others.

There was no immediate response from CNMI leaders as of press time.

The letter was in response

to the letter some U.S. lawmakers sent to Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas concerning the entry of nationals from the People's Republic of China into the CNMI. That letter called for the abolition of the discretionary parole program, through which PRC nationals are allowed entry to the CNMI as tourists.

"The Nov. 30, 2023, letter from members of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives addressed long-standing concerns about

the use of discretionary parole for PRC nationals entering the CNMI for tourism. The business community recognizes the importance of addressing security issues but emphasizes the need for solutions that do not hinder the CNMI's economic recovery, which is heavily dependent on tourism," said the Chamber and HANMI letter.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

NCLEX

From page 3

paring her for success in the exam. "NMC prepared me extremely well for the exam, the instructors made sure we had all the tools we needed to ace the exam, clinicals were a big help because we were able to put what we learned into practice and that was huge for me because I am a kinesthetic learner and I learn

more when things are being put into practice."

Garon initially worked as a graduate nurse at Saipan Renal Care and is now working there as a registered nurse.

Having graduated this year with a nursing degree, Rivera, pursued the medical field to make an impact on many people.

"As a child, I have always had the heart and desire to be in the medical field. My motivation for pursuing a nurs-

ing degree was that I wanted to make my parents and God proud in a career where I could make an impact on many people," Rivera said.

Rivera mentions the importance of her support system in her passage on the NCLEX, "My church family has always been praying for my success in my career, and my parents who are hard immigrant workers always pushed for me to pursue my dreams. They see the poten-

tial in me which pushes me to be the best version of myself that I can be."

Rivera is planning to continue her nursing education and pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree and, eventually, her master's degree and be a nurse practitioner in the near future.

For more information about NMC's nursing program, email Aldan at rosa.aldan@mariandas.edu or call (670) 237-6744. (NMC)

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

with others a meal and a reason for the hope we have at Christmas. It is a reminder that there can be joy even in the midst of difficulties.

Please join us!" he said.

Saipan Community Church is located along Beach Road across from the Mobil gas station in Susupe. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Community Church members prepare the food during last year's Christmas Feast.

CREDITORS

From page 1

filed an application for a writ of execution with the U.S. District Court for the NMI against IPI's personal properties.

The creditors are asking the district court to issue a writ of execution against IPI's vehicles, liquor, IPI's crystal dragons, IPI's computer hardware, IPI's furniture and equipment, IPI's casino-related and security equipment, and any other non-exempt personal property identified by the creditors to be sold in an auction to satisfy the IPI creditors' judgments.

"The IPI creditors applies for a writ of execution directed at judgment debtor IPI in the amount of \$5,028,937.72 plus post-judgment interest, costs, and fees due and owing, to be served upon IPI. The IPI creditors requests the court to set a hearing on the return of the writ and to provide IPI with the opportunity to advance any applicable exemption," states the motion.

The creditors did note that the total resale value of the assets will likely not exceed the monetary amount of the IPI creditors' judgments.

According to the application, the district court entered a judgment in favor of U.S.A. Fanter in the amount of \$500,000 plus post-judgment interest rates at 4.34% per annum against IPI on March 20, 2023.

The U.S. District Court for the NMI also entered a judgment in favor of Artman in the amount of \$106,890 plus post-judgment interest against IPI on Jan. 17.

As for SPLC, the District Court for the NMI entered a

judgment in its favor in the amount of \$766,595.33 plus post-judgment interest at the rate of 5.39% per annum against IPI on Aug. 29. The court later granted an amended judgment in favor of SPLC in the amount of \$28,641.55 plus post-judgment interest at the rate of 5.44% against IPI on Oct. 25.

Meanwhile, the Superior Court entered three judgments in favor of Fujitec against IPI: judgment in the amount of \$1,288,603.95 plus post-judgment interest at the rate of 9% per annum on Jan. 3; judgment in the amount of \$1,378,056.50 plus post-judgment interest at the rate of 9% per annum on Jan. 26; and three judgment on attorney's fees and costs in the amount of \$12,295.50 plus post-judgment interest at the rate of 3% per annum on April 14.

The Superior Court also entered a judgment in favor of IPWAN in the amount of \$188,125.30 plus post-judgment interest at the rate of 9% per annum against IPI on Dec. 13, 2022.

As for GT Building, the Superior Court entered a judgment in favor of the creditor in the amount of \$833,816.48 plus post-judgment interest at the rate of 9% per annum against IPI on March 9, 2022.

GT Building also applied for two writs of executions against IPI, and another writ of execution remains pending. The amount seized from IPI to satisfy the GT Building judgment, including the pending writ of execution, is in the amount of \$74,086.89.

This leaves the remaining amount against IPI from the GT Building's judgment at \$759,729.59 plus post-judgment interest.



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MTEC Marianas Tourism Education Council chairwoman Vicky Benavente, center, and MTEC board member Catherine Perry share about the Marianas tourism economy with students of Saipan Southern High School during a presentation of MTEC and the Marianas Visitors Authority on Dec. 6, 2023, at the school.

tourism even at a young age.

"We're grateful for the continued collaboration with the CNMI Public School System and for linking MTEC with our youth to share vital information about the islands' tourism industry," said MTEC chairwoman Vicky Benavente. "After all, these students are the future leaders of our community."

The presentation also includes an overview of the MVA, including its annual signature events like the ongoing 19th Annual Christmas in the Marianas.

"One hundred percent, our young people have a stake in the tourism industry," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "Not only does tourism provide jobs for their families, but they are also ambassadors of the best of what the Marianas has to offer—respect, friendliness, care for the environment, and a sense of curiosity and adventure. We value this opportunity to engage with them about tourism."

Fourth-grade teachers at San Vicente Elementary School also shared their thoughts after the presentation.

"We thought [it] was an excellent presentation for the students," said Alex Mercado. "All the students were engaged."

"It gave the kids a better idea of tourism," said Miranda Indalecio. "They have a better idea of why tourists come to the island. ... They really know the meaning of tourism now."

"I think the presentation was really essential because we depend largely on tourism, and it's an important part of our community," said Paz Mettao.

"Kids have to learn tourism at an early age, as early as fourth grade, so it can give them an idea of how to help our island's tourism industry," said Tes Camacho.

Other MTEC board members are vice chairman Glenn Policare (Kanoa Resort), secretary Martin Duenas (MVA), treasurer Larissa Larson, Dr. Galvin Guerrero (Northern Marianas College), Larry Lee, Naomi Nishimura (CNMI Public School System), Gordon Marciano (PDI), Catherine Perry (Integrity Communications), and Dr. Yunzi Zhang (Northern Marianas College).

Schools interested in starting a MY WAVE Club in support of tourism may contact MVA Community Projects specialist Jack Aranda at jaranda@mymarianas.com or 664-3200. (MVA)

MTEC, MVA start SY 2023-2024 presentations



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AMENDED PUBLIC NOTICE

Thursday, December 14, 2023

PURSUANT TO PUBLIC LAW 8-41, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CEDA) THRU ITS ACTING CHAIRPERSON, HEREBY INFORMS THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE CEDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL HOLD ITS REGULAR MEETING ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2023 AT 10:00 A.M. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE CEDA CONFERENCE ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, CEDA BUILDING, OLEAI SAIPAN. THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING IS AS FOLLOWS:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda
- D. Election of Officers
- E. Adoption of Minutes
 - 1. December 14, 2022
 - 2. January 6, 2023

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

REPORTS

- A. Executive Director's Report
 - 1. Administrative & Personnel
 - a. Deliberation & Board action on Comptroller's position
 - b. Deliberation and Board action on CEDA FY 2024 Budget
- B. Financial Matters
 - 1. Financial Statements for FY 2023
 - C. Loan & Legal Matters
 - 1. Deliberation & Board action on Island Development Corporation
 - 2. Deliberation & Board action on Roman Matsumoto
 - 3. Deliberation & Board action on Tomas M. & Cecilia T. Calvo
 - D. Qualifying Certificate/Economic Development Activities
 - 1. Programs' Update

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. (Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/ JOCELYN T. KING
Acting Chairperson

The Marianas Tourism Education Council and Marianas Visitors Authority have kicked off their annual school presentations this month.

In the first week of outreach, four schools have welcomed MTEC and MVA to share the message that "Tourism is Everybody's Business" with their students, including Adm. Herbert G. Hopwood Middle School, San Vicente Elementary School, Saipan Southern High School, and Tanapag Middle School.

The outreach team aims to engage fifth graders, seventh graders, and 10th graders this year with information and ac-



Marianas Visitors Authority Community Projects specialist Jack Aranda talks about tourism with students of Tanapag Middle School during the educational outreach presentation of MTEC and the Marianas Visitors Authority on Dec. 11, 2023, at the school.

tivities highlighting the Marianas' primary economic driver, how it impacts their lives, and ways students can support

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL RFP NO.: RFP24-DCCA/HPO-42400004

SUBMISSION DATE: DECEMBER 29, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"DCCA-HISTORIC PRESERVATION EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL DISASTER PROJECT MANAGEMENT SERVICES"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (<https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/>) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPTOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP CAN BE MADE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS BY DECEMBER 21, 2023, TO MR. FRANCISCO RABAULIMAN VIA EMAIL AT frank.rabauliman@gov.mp

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIA SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ VIVIAN T. SABLON
ACTING SECRETARY, DCCA

/s/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS



CEDA
COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

P.O. Box 502149, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 • Fax: (670) 235-7147
www.developcnmi.com

AMENDED PUBLIC NOTICE

Thursday, December 14, 2023

PURSUANT TO PUBLIC LAW 8-41, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION DIVISION (DCD) OF THE COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CEDA) THRU ITS ACTING CHAIRPERSON HEREBY INFORMS THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE DCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL HOLD ITS REGULAR MEETING ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2023 AT 1:30 P.M. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE CEDA CONFERENCE ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, CEDA BUILDING, OLEAI, SAIPAN. THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING IS AS FOLLOWS:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda
- D. Election of Officers
- E. Adoption of Minutes – December 14, 2022

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

REPORTS

- A. DCD Financial Status

III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Loan Matters
 - 1. Daniel & Remedio Bunig
 - 2. Corrine Cing
 - 3. Micronesia Productions (CNMI) LLC
 - 4. Eagle Construction Corporation
 - 5. Francine & Jerad Atalig
 - 6. Maxine & Chrissaine Pangelinan
 - 7. Mateo Santos

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. (Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/ JOCELYN T. KING
Acting Chairperson

New officers at helm of US Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 140-02-24



CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR

Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, stands with newly elected officers of U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 140-02-24 at the annual Change of Watch ceremony on Dec. 5, 2023, in Hagatna, Guam. The Change of Watch included the swearing-in of newly elected officers. Duce Romias assumed the role of flotilla commander, taking over from Robert Vasquez, who advanced to the division commander position. Rich Marston, recently retired from the U.S. Coast Guard, was elected vice flotilla commander. Jodie Nelson, the former flotilla staff officer for human resources, was named division chief of staff.

HAGATNA, Guam—The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 140-02-24 conducted its annual Change of Watch ceremony on Dec. 5, 2023. The event marked a transition in leadership and celebrated the Auxiliary's ongoing commitment to maritime safety and community service.

Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, presided over the ceremony and administered the oaths. Distinguished guests included active-duty officers and Rear Adm. Cari Thomas, CEO of Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA), who spoke about the invaluable support CGMA provides, particularly highlighted by the recent assistance to auxiliarists impacted by Typhoon Mawar.

"The Change of Watch is not just a ceremony; it's a testament to the unwavering dedication and invaluable contributions of our Auxiliary members," said Simmons. "The Auxiliary is the cornerstone of our community outreach and maritime safety efforts. Their commitment, both in times of calm and crisis, is exemplary. They significantly enhance our mission effectiveness through initiatives like boating safety education and operational patrols."

The Change of Watch included the swearing-in of newly elected officers. Duce Romias assumed the role of flotilla commander, taking over from Robert Vasquez, who advanced to the division commander position. Rich Marston, recently retired from the U.S. Coast Guard, was elected vice flotilla commander. Jodie Nelson, the former flotilla staff officer for human resources, was named division chief of staff.

For more information about the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 140-02-24 and its activities, including opportunities to volunteer, visit the official website at <http://uscauxiliaryguam.blogspot.com>. (USCG)

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve and so proud

of all our members," said Vasquez. "The leadership transition we celebrate today ensures that the legacy of service, skill, and solidarity within the Auxiliary continues to flourish. I am immensely grateful for the service and our volunteers' vital role in safeguarding our maritime community."

During the ceremony, the Auxiliary's achievements from the past month were highlighted, including a 20-minute boating safety presentation at the U.S. Coast Guard Industry Day and significant contributions to operational boat programs and safety patrols. The patrols, involving members like Dan Bartlett and Bob Lynch, showcase the flotilla's commitment to excellence and teamwork.

Despite the flotilla's strong membership of more than 80 volunteers, only 21 percent are currently qualified to participate in Auxiliary mission programs. The ceremony served as a platform to encourage more members to engage in various training opportunities, including vessel examiners, program visitors, public education instructors, and boat crew qualifications. The Auxiliary emphasizes the importance of hands-on participation and collaboration with active-duty members.

The event concluded with discussions on new business, including an awards ceremony, and emphasized the need for continuous learning and leadership development through various training programs.

For more information about the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 140-02-24 and its activities, including opportunities to volunteer, visit the official website at <http://uscauxiliaryguam.blogspot.com>. (USCG)

VINCENT J. SEMAN, CNMI Bar No. F-0361
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Attorney for: Petitioner GILL BLAS CONDOMINIUM OWNERS ASSOCIATION

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

GILL BLAS CONDOMINIUM OWNERS ASSOCIATION, Plaintiff,
vs.
T.R.C., LTD. et al., Defendants.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on December 4, 2023, the undersigned will sell at public auction to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth herein below, to satisfy a judgment entered in the above-captioned case in favor of Plaintiff, all of Defendant T.R.C. Ltd.'s interest in and to real property situated in Garapan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, described as:

Remaining leasehold interest expiring on October 11, 2044 in Unit #201 of the Gill Blas Condominiums, situated on that portion of Lot No. 003 D 19, as more particularly described in the Gill Blas Sublease and Residential Sales Agreement on File at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office as File No. 96-1156

1. Date, Time and Place of Sale. The sale, open to the general public (including the Plaintiff and Defendant), will be on Friday, January 5, 2024, at 10:00a.m. at Seman Law Offices, LLC, 2nd Floor, JET Building, Gualo Rai, Saipan, CNMI.

2. Inspection of Property. The sale property is located in Garapan, Saipan and may be inspected upon request prior to the public auction. Arrangements for inspecting the premises can be made with Vincent J. Seman from Seman Law Offices, LLC, (670) 323-2115. Failure of the bidder to inspect the property will not constitute grounds for any claim, adjustment or rescission by the bidder.

3. Warranties and Covenants. The property listed in this Notice will be sold in its current condition, "as is". The sale will be held without any warranties or covenants whatsoever, whether express or implied, including but not limited to warranties of merchantability and/or title for any purpose whatsoever, all of which warranties and covenants are hereby expressly disclaimed. Neither the undersigned nor Plaintiff shall be liable for the quality of the property listed for sale, or for any fault or defect in the description thereof. Buyer shall not be entitled to rescission, damages, or any other remedy on account thereof.

4. Conduct of Sale.

- a. RESERVE. The sale will be held with reserve. Disclosure of the reserve price on the property offered will be at the sole discretion of the undersigned but will in no case be less than the outstanding judgment, with costs, in favor of Plaintiff.
- b. ADVANCE BIDS. Bids may be submitted in advance for the property listed. The highest of such advance bids will be the opening bid for the property at the public auction. Advance bids must be submitted in writing and delivered to Vincent J. Seman, Esq., Seman Law Offices, LLC, Second Floor, JET Building, P.O. Box 10001 PMB 168, Saipan, MP 96950.
- c. DISPUTES. The undersigned may resubmit for public auction any property listed in this notice if a dispute arises as to any bid thereon.
- d. DEPOSIT. Immediately after a sale is consummated, the successful bidder shall pay the undersigned a deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price. Payment shall be in cash or certified check. The balance of ninety percent (90%) must be paid to the Plaintiff, in care of Seman Law Offices, LLC, Trust Account, within three (3) days from the date of sale, in cash or certified check, if the balance is not paid. Plaintiff will retain the deposit as liquidated damages, and may again offer the property for sale.
- e. MEMORANDUM OF SALE. If requested by the undersigned, a successful bidder must sign a Memorandum of Sale immediately after the sale of the property is struck at auction.

5. Court Approval Required. The sale of the subject property is subject to approval by the Court. The Auctioneer and Plaintiff make no warranties or promises with respect to Court approval of the sale, including but not limited to the time in which such approval shall be granted. No delay in the granting of Court approval shall be grounds for any claim, adjustment or rescission by the successful bidder. The successful bidder will be promptly notified if and when Court approval is granted.

6. Change of Terms and Conditions of Sale. The undersigned reserves the right to change any of the terms hereof by announcement, written or oral, made before the public auction or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause, will be binding on all bidders by constructive notice. Plaintiff expressly reserves the right to withdraw the property listed in this Notice before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted, or to request an adjournment of the sale, without notice, at any time before any specific property is sold.

Dated this 8th day of December, 2023.

/s/ Vincent J. Seman
VINCENT J. SEMAN
Attorney for Plaintiff

VINCENT J. SEMAN, CNMI Bar No. F-0361
Seman Law Offices, LLC
JET Realty Bldg., Suite 204
P.O. Box 10001 PMB 168
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Telephone: (670) 323-2115
E-mail: vjseman@semanlaw.com

Attorney for: Petitioner GILL BLAS CONDOMINIUM OWNERS ASSOCIATION

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

GILL BLAS CONDOMINIUM OWNERS ASSOCIATION, Plaintiff,
vs.
HARUMI SHIRAGA, et al., Defendants.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on December 4, 2023, the undersigned will sell at public auction to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth herein below, to satisfy a judgment entered in the above-captioned case in favor of Plaintiff, all of Defendant Harumi Shiraga's interest in and to real property situated in Garapan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, described as:

Remaining leasehold interest expiring on October 11, 2044 in Unit #202 of the Gill Blas Condominiums, situated on that portion of Lot No. 003 D 19, as more particularly described in the Gill Blas Sublease and Residential Sales Agreement on File at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office as File No. 96-1156

1. Date, Time and Place of Sale. The sale, open to the general public (including the Plaintiff and Defendant), will be on Friday, January 5, 2024, at 10:00a.m. at Seman Law Offices, LLC, 2nd Floor, JET Building, Gualo Rai, Saipan, CNMI.

2. Inspection of Property. The sale property is located in Garapan, Saipan and may be inspected upon request prior to the public auction. Arrangements for inspecting the premises can be made with Vincent J. Seman from Seman Law Offices, LLC, (670) 323-2115. Failure of the bidder to inspect the property will not constitute grounds for any claim, adjustment or rescission by the bidder.

3. Warranties and Covenants. The property listed in this Notice will be sold in its current condition, "as is". The sale will be held without any warranties or covenants whatsoever, whether express or implied, including but not limited to warranties of merchantability and/or title for any purpose whatsoever, all of which warranties and covenants are hereby expressly disclaimed. Neither the undersigned nor Plaintiff shall be liable for the quality of the property listed for sale, or for any fault or defect in the description thereof. Buyer shall not be entitled to rescission, damages, or any other remedy on account thereof.

4. Conduct of Sale.

- a. RESERVE. The sale will be held with reserve. Disclosure of the reserve price on the property offered will be at the sole discretion of the undersigned but will in no case be less than the outstanding judgment, with costs, in favor of Plaintiff.
- b. ADVANCE BIDS. Bids may be submitted in advance for the property listed. The highest of such advance bids will be the opening bid for the property at the public auction. Advance bids must be submitted in writing and delivered to Vincent J. Seman, Esq., Seman Law Offices, LLC, Second Floor, JET Building, P.O. Box 10001 PMB 168, Saipan, MP 96950.
- c. DISPUTES. The undersigned may resubmit for public auction any property listed in this notice if a dispute arises as to any bid thereon.
- d. DEPOSIT. Immediately after a sale is consummated, the successful bidder shall pay the undersigned a deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price. Payment shall be in cash or certified check. The balance of ninety percent (90%) must be paid to the Plaintiff, in care of Seman Law Offices, LLC, Trust Account, within three (3) days from the date of sale, in cash or certified check, if the balance is not paid. Plaintiff will retain the deposit as liquidated damages, and may again offer the property for sale.
- e. MEMORANDUM OF SALE. If requested by the undersigned, a successful bidder must sign a Memorandum of Sale immediately after the sale of the property is struck at auction.

5. Court Approval Required. The sale of the subject property is subject to approval by the Court. The Auctioneer and Plaintiff make no warranties or promises with respect to Court approval of the sale, including but not limited to the time in which such approval shall be granted. No delay in the granting of Court approval shall be grounds for any claim, adjustment or rescission by the successful bidder. The successful bidder will be promptly notified if and when Court approval is granted.

6. Change of Terms and Conditions of Sale. The undersigned reserves the right to change any of the terms hereof by announcement, written or oral, made before the public auction or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause, will be binding on all bidders by constructive notice. Plaintiff expressly reserves the right to withdraw the property listed in this Notice before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted, or to request an adjournment of the sale, without notice, at any time before any specific property is sold.

Dated this 8th day of December, 2023.

/s/ Vincent J. Seman
VINCENT J. SEMAN
Attorney for Plaintiff

VINCENT J. SEMAN, CNMI Bar No. F-0361
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Attorney for: Petitioner GILL BLAS CONDOMINIUM OWNERS ASSOCIATION

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

GILL BLAS CONDOMINIUM OWNERS ASSOCIATION, Plaintiff,
vs.
SHIMA OSADA, et al., Defendants.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on December 4, 2023, the undersigned will sell at public auction to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth herein below, to satisfy a judgment entered in the above-captioned case in favor of Plaintiff, all of Defendant Shima Osada's interest in and to real property situated in Garapan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, described as:

Remaining leasehold interest expiring on October 11, 2044 in Unit #302 of the Gill Blas Condominiums, situated on that portion of Lot No. 003 D 19, as more particularly described in the Gill Blas Sublease and Residential Sales Agreement on File at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office as File No. 96-1156

1. Date, Time and Place of Sale. The sale, open to the general public (including the Plaintiff and Defendant), will be on Friday, January 5, 2024, at 10:00a.m. at Seman Law Offices, LLC, 2nd Floor, JET Building, Gualo Rai, Saipan, CNMI.

2. Inspection of Property. The sale property is located in Garapan, Saipan and may be inspected upon request prior to the public auction. Arrangements for inspecting the premises can be made with Vincent J. Seman from Seman Law Offices, LLC, (670) 323-2115. Failure of the bidder to inspect the property will not constitute grounds for any claim, adjustment or rescission by the bidder.

3. Warranties and Covenants. The property listed in this Notice will be sold in its current condition, "as is". The sale will be held without any warranties or covenants whatsoever, whether express or implied, including but not limited to warranties of merchantability and/or title for any purpose whatsoever, all of which warranties and covenants are hereby expressly disclaimed. Neither the undersigned nor Plaintiff shall be liable for the quality of the property listed for sale, or for any fault or defect in the description thereof. Buyer shall not be entitled to rescission, damages, or any other remedy on account thereof.

4. Conduct of Sale.

- a. RESERVE. The sale will be held with reserve. Disclosure of the reserve price on the property offered will be at the sole discretion of the undersigned but will in no case be less than the outstanding judgment, with costs, in favor of Plaintiff.
- b. ADVANCE BIDS. Bids may be submitted in advance for the property listed. The highest of such advance bids will be the opening bid for the property at the public auction. Advance bids must be submitted in writing and delivered to Vincent J. Seman, Esq., Seman Law Offices, LLC, Second Floor, JET Building, P.O. Box 10001 PMB 168, Saipan, MP 96950.
- c. DISPUTES. The undersigned may resubmit for public auction any property listed in this notice if a dispute arises as to any bid thereon.
- d. DEPOSIT. Immediately after a sale is consummated, the successful bidder shall pay the undersigned a deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price. Payment shall be in cash or certified check. The balance of ninety percent (90%) must be paid to the Plaintiff, in care of Seman Law Offices, LLC, Trust Account, within three (3) days from the date of sale, in cash or certified check, if the balance is not paid. Plaintiff will retain the deposit as liquidated damages, and may again offer the property for sale.
- e. MEMORANDUM OF SALE. If requested by the undersigned, a successful bidder must sign a Memorandum of Sale immediately after the sale of the property is struck at auction.

5. Court Approval Required. The sale of the subject property is subject to approval by the Court. The Auctioneer and Plaintiff make no warranties or promises with respect to Court approval of the sale, including but not limited to the time in which such approval shall be granted. No delay in the granting of Court approval shall be grounds for any claim, adjustment or rescission by the successful bidder. The successful bidder will be promptly notified if and when Court approval is granted.

6. Change of Terms and Conditions of Sale. The undersigned reserves the right to change any of the terms hereof by announcement, written or oral, made before the public auction or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause, will be binding on all bidders by constructive notice. Plaintiff expressly reserves the right to withdraw the property listed in this Notice before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted, or to request an adjournment of the sale, without notice, at any time before any specific property is sold.

Dated this 8th day of December, 2023.

/s/ Vincent J. Seman
VINCENT J. SEMAN
Attorney for Plaintiff

VINCENT J. SEMAN, CNMI Bar No. F-0361
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Attorney for: Petitioner GILL BLAS CONDOMINIUM OWNERS ASSOCIATION

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

GILL BLAS CONDOMINIUM OWNERS ASSOCIATION, Plaintiff,
vs.
KOUSEI FUJIWARA, et al., Defendants.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on December 4, 2023, the undersigned will sell at public auction to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth herein below, to satisfy a judgment entered in the above-captioned case in favor of Plaintiff, all of Defendant Kousei Fujiwara's interest in and to real property situated in Garapan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, described as:

Remaining leasehold interest expiring on October 11, 2044 in Unit #302 of the Gill Blas Condominiums, situated on that portion of Lot No. 003 D 19, as more particularly described in the Gill Blas Sublease and Residential Sales Agreement on File at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office as File No. 96-1156

1. Date, Time and Place of Sale. The sale, open to the general public (including the Plaintiff and Defendant), will be on Friday, January 5, 2024, at 10:00a.m. at Seman Law Offices, LLC, 2nd Floor, JET Building, Gualo Rai, Saipan, CNMI.

2. Inspection of Property. The sale property is located in Garapan, Saipan and may be inspected upon request prior to the public auction. Arrangements for inspecting the premises can be made with Vincent J. Seman from Seman Law Offices, LLC, (670) 323-2115. Failure of the bidder to inspect the property will not constitute grounds for any claim

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Put up for sacrifice: Anti-abortion zealot Ken Paxton makes mom of two into an example

Kate Cox, a 31-year-old Dallas-Fort Worth married mother of two, might die. She's not recovering from some tragic accident, nor does she have some kind of untreatable ailment. The best path to her health is eminently clear and medically proven: an abortion to terminate an unviable 20-week pregnancy, as recommended by her doctors.

Those doctors notably don't include Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, who has gotten the state Supreme Court to halt a lower court's temporary restraining order that had given her the right to obtain such an abortion under one of the state's narrow exceptions to a near-total ban. To ensure that Cox wouldn't move ahead with a procedure, Paxton also sent letters to several hospitals threatening legal action if they provided Cox the medical care that she so desperately needs.

A medical decision of Cox and her doctors, supported by her husband, should be up to Cox and her doctors, supported by her husband, not Paxton and some judges. The same goes for all women and girls. Abortion care, freely sought and properly medically regulated, should always be available to anyone who needs it, regardless of how compelling politicians might consider their personal circumstances. Nonetheless, Cox's plight really puts the lie to the claim that any part of this is about protecting life.

In his petition to the high court, Paxton wrote that "nothing can restore the unborn child's life that will be lost as a result" of their failure to stop the lower court order. He did not specify in the filing what this life would entail; the consensus of Cox's actual doctors is that the child would live for perhaps a few days of suffering before succumbing to complications of a rare genetic condition.

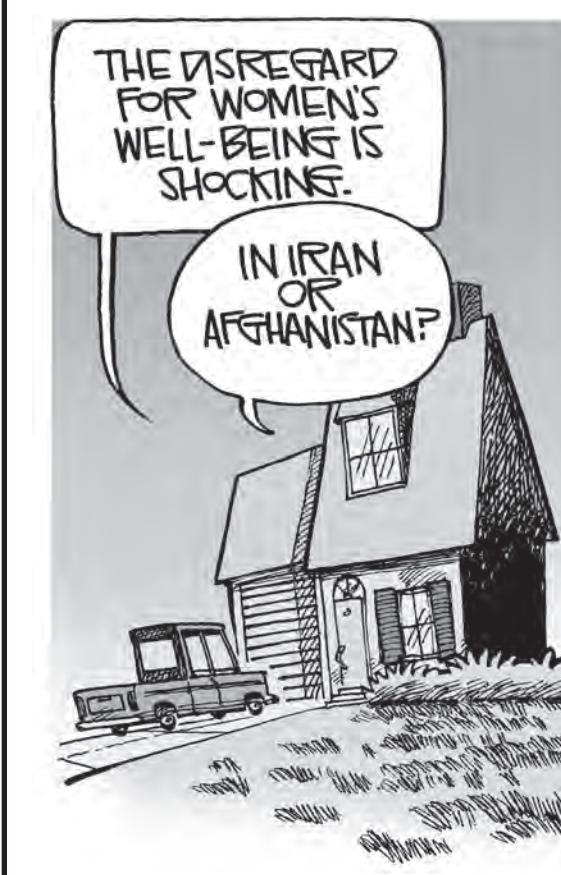
In other words, Paxton—who knows plenty about opportunistic legal maneuvering from experience delaying his own long-awaited securities fraud trial by more than eight years—is exploiting his office to condemn the child of a nonviable pregnancy to a short and miserable process of dying. That's not an exaggeration, it's the almost certain reality as can be dispassionately described by trained medical professionals which, again, Paxton and his lawyers are not.

Paxton's concerns about life also clearly don't extend to Cox herself, whose own life is threatened by the pregnancy, not just hypothetically but as evidenced by the fact that she's already had to go to the emergency room multiple times. Cox needs an abortion in order to protect her own life and her fertility for having a child in the future.

Does Paxton care about Cox's two children whose lives would certainly be indelibly impacted by the preventable death of their mother? Does he care about anything but his own political agenda?

In effect, Cox has done everything a politician like Paxton

See PUT on Page 9



Why did Israel miss so many warnings of the Hamas attack? Here's one answer

More than a year before Hamas killed some 1,200 residents of Israel and kidnapped more than 200, Israeli intelligence officers reportedly learned about plans for the attack in extraordinary detail but couldn't convince their leaders to take preventative action. How could a world-class security apparatus so badly underestimate one of its most dedicated adversaries?

As leaders become more insular and closed-minded, the quality of their information and decisions deteriorates. When security is on the line, the results can be tragic.

Benjamin Netanyahu's secretive, ideologically rigid leadership style in that way helped undermine Israel's security and imperil his people. He isn't the first such world leader whose miscalculations led to such a disaster.

George W. Bush's administration was another infamous example. His cadre of top advisers on national security, including Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, believed the country's priority was to counter threatening nation-states, by force if necessary. Although intelligence officials repeatedly briefed them and the president on the terrorist threats from a band of Islamic extremists known as al-Qaida, the danger didn't match their idea of a top national security concern. Bush therefore failed to order expanded intelligence sharing among agencies or take other steps that experts believe could have helped prevent 9/11.

The administration persisted in this misdirection even after the attack, which Cheney and other advisers treated as an opportunity to pursue their predetermined priorities. The vice president famously shuttled to Langley, Virginia, to strong-arm CIA analysts into producing reports that could suggest links between al-Qaida and the troublesome regime in Iraq, leading to the disastrous invasion of that country.

When I joined the CIA in 2010, instructors stressed to my class of new analysts that we must collect differing views before finalizing analytic decisions. Groupthink in business can cost money, but groupthink in national security can cost lives. Agency veterans of the 9/11 era had recognized its follies and revamped the training in an effort to prevent similar intelligence failures in the future.

Netanyahu's current administration in Israel is the most right-wing in his country's history, populated with ideologues fixated on consolidating their power by expanding settlements in the West Bank. Bibi's Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, is "widely known for racist, anti-Arab views," as one academic analysis noted, and supports Zionist terror organizations. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich lives in a West Bank settlement deemed illegal under international law and has denied that Palestinians exist as a people. And Justice Minister Yariv Levin spearheaded a controversial attempt to prevent the judiciary from thwarting Netanyahu's plan to nullify Palestinian autonomy.

Netanyahu and his deputies were committed to the idea that they could guarantee Israel's security even as they squeezed Palestin-

By BRENT GIANNOTTA

Los Angeles Times

Brent Giannotta is a writer based in Los Angeles and a former CIA political analyst.



ians into ever smaller enclaves with receding hopes of anything approaching statehood. They certainly weren't primed to consider a serious threat from Gaza when their government detected it last year.

Israeli officials obtained a document they called "Jericho Wall," which outlined a Hamas assault with rockets, drones, paragliders and motorcycles targeting Israeli cities and bases around the Gaza Strip, the New York Times reported. But the military and intelligence leaders who saw the plan reportedly dismissed it as beyond Hamas' capabilities.

Under Netanyahu, Israel's intelligence agencies have tended to elevate reports that affirm his security credentials and suppress those that suggest weaknesses. The IDF's Military Intelligence Directorate, Aman, also has too many analysts who are poorly integrated into the agency, preventing lower-level officers from "connecting dots," according to Haifa University's Uri Bar-Joseph.

In the months before the attack, the Israel Defense Forces grounded three large observation balloons surveilling Gaza due to bad weather but never returned them to service. Hours before the attack, Israel detected warnings that produced a flurry of concern, but the intelligence directorate's commander, Maj. Gen. Aharon Haliva, announced no major deployments and continued his vacation on the coast.

When a crisis befalls a small circle of closed-minded leaders, they tend to react with strategic and often self-destructive recklessness. Like Bush after 9/11, Netanyahu has not only denied being warned about the attack but also launched a response that has brought international condemnation.

Hard-headed governments regularly miscalculate the risks of their most provocative acts. In February 2022, Vladimir Putin decided—probably on his own—to invade Ukraine, an operation he assumed would take 10 days, according to research by the Royal United Services Institute, a British security think tank. Almost two years later, nearly half a million troops from both sides are dead or injured, over 11 million people are displaced and the International Criminal Court has issued a warrant for Putin's arrest.

The modern U.S. national security apparatus is sluggish and See WHY on Page 9

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or

less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

International women's groups and leaders have remained silent on Hamas' violence for too long

By SHOSHANAH CONOVER AND WENDI GEFFEN
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The events of Oct. 7 and the war that has followed, at an incomprehensible scale of civilian violence and death, is devastating. This war so far away feels palpably close to us all and has shaken our community to its core.

For us as women, there has been an additional aspect of the attacks on Oct. 7 that has felt like a double assault: the systemic rape of women and girls by Hamas terrorists and the lack of response from the world.

Sexual and gender-based violence is horrific, with emotional wounds that linger well beyond the physical wounds. The healing process for the survivors of the Oct. 7 assaults begins with being heard and believed. We cannot overstate the importance of supporting these women, like we would all survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

We recoiled when reading about Shani Louk, a 23-year-old German Israeli, who can be seen in a Hamas-made video, semi-conscious and half-naked, being taken to Gaza in the back of a pickup truck with men sitting astride her. Another video shows

a woman being led out of a vehicle by heavily armed men, her wrists and ankles sliced open and her jeans bloodied at the crotch. First responders have recounted finding dead Israeli women with unmistakable evidence of rape and mutilation.

Our heartbreak is not only that these brutal sexual assaults were perpetrated against these women and girls, but that so many international women's organizations and leaders remained silent about it for too long. That is why this has felt like a double assault.

We ask that all people of goodwill acknowledge this assault, horror and heartbreak. Your bearing witness matters. Speaking in solidarity supports survivors to describe the horrors they endured without fear. When survivors believe they will not be believed or that the crime will be minimized, many will not speak up for fear of retraumatization.

Speaking in solidarity, we bring attention to the urgent need to release all hostages still being held in Gaza, including those who endured or witnessed sexual and gender-based crimes—enabling them to receive the vital physical and emotional medical care that they are currently being denied.

Speaking in solidarity, we increase pressure on organizations

to condemn and sanction the perpetrators, which helps prevent the recurrence of these severe violations of international law and fundamental morality.

As so many know firsthand, sexual and gender-based violence can be devastating, and the shame lingers well beyond the physical wounds. By speaking in solidarity, we enable the survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and their families—and the families of the victims who did not survive, like Louk—to feel the support they need to help them begin to heal.

We can join with grassroots efforts in Israel and elsewhere, such as the Deborah Institute, which has launched the Civil Commission on Oct. 7 Crimes by Hamas against Women and Children. This unique and all-too-rare collaboration of international human rights experts and women's rights organizations was created to gather Oct. 7 testimony, evidence and advocacy and to provide expert advice.

This week, the Jewish community celebrates Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights. We are reminded that even a small flame can dispel the darkness. In that spirit, may we come together to kindle flames of hope for the world we all share, and the type of world we hope to create, together.

Rabbi Shoshannah Conover is senior rabbi at Temple Sholom in Chicago and Rabbi Wendi Geffen is the senior rabbi at North Shore Congregation Israel in Glencoe.

We must prevent humanitarian aid from being used as an instrument of war

AMMAN, Jordan—Every hour of every day of the last two months, aid agencies have pleaded for deliveries of humanitarian supplies to the Gaza Strip. We have been placed in the intolerable position of requesting permission to do lifesaving work.

Last week, I wrote to the president of the United Nations General Assembly to inform him that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's ability to continue delivering its mandate in Gaza has become very limited. In my 35 years of work in complex emergencies, I would never have expected to write such a letter, which predicted the killing of my staff and the collapse of the mandate I am expected to fulfill.

Civilians in this war are pawns, and yet humanitarian aid has been made conditional. Humanitarian assistance is withheld or delivered according to political and military agendas to which the United Nations is not privy. Food, water and fuel are being systematically used as weapons of war in Gaza, as is disinformation. Attacking and trying to discredit humanitarian organizations such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency is yet another means of waging war and compromising the humanitarian response, further weakening the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Hamas has absolved itself of any responsibility toward the civilian population. It has shamefully stated that full responsibility for humanitarian assistance toward civilians lies with the U.N. Israel has imposed a near-total siege on Gaza—inflicting collective punishment on more than 2 million people, half of whom are children. The meager supplies that Israel has been allowing into Gaza have little effect in the face of the overwhelming needs of an entire population.

Since the beginning of the war, Israel has forcibly moved more than 1.8 million Gazans from their homes, especially from the northern parts of the Gaza Strip. This is the largest forced displacement of Palestinians since 1948.

More than 270 people sheltering in UNRWA facilities have since been killed, and nearly 1,000 injured. Most of these shelters were located in the middle and southern areas of the Gaza Strip, which were thought to be safer. The sad reality is that Gazans are not safe anywhere: not at home, not in a hospital, not under the U.N. flag, not in the north, middle or south.

Now that the humanitarian pause has ended, what will be the fate of more than 2 million Palestinians besieged and holed up in a tiny area in southern Gaza?

The United Nations and several member states, including the U.S., have firmly rejected forcibly displacing Gazans out of the Gaza Strip. But the developments we are witnessing point to attempts to move Palestinians into Egypt, regardless of whether they stay there or are resettled elsewhere.

The decimation of northern Gaza and the displacement of millions of Gazans to the south is the first stage of such a scenario, and it is already complete. The next stage is underway—forcing people out of the urban center in Khan Yunis and closer to the Egyptian border.

Bombardment and a tight siege are again creating conditions under which nothing more than mere survival is possible. The deprivation of humanitarian aid is key to this plan. After the destruction of the north, the destruction of the south is ongoing, except this time, people have nowhere to go.

Humanitarian agencies are again being asked to provide tents in designated “deconflicted” or “safe” areas in the south. But the reality is that unilaterally designating an area a “safe zone” in a war situation will not make it safer.

For many Palestinians the only option for a better future is to leave Gaza altogether. Judging by policy and humanitarian discussions underway, it is hard to believe that the Palestinians of Gaza who are displaced today will be allowed—or even willing—to return to their destroyed homes any time soon.

If this path continues, leading to what many are already calling a second Nakba, Gaza will not be a land for Palestinians anymore.

A different trajectory can still be pursued, starting with a steady humanitarian cease-fire that leads to the release of all hostages, firm compliance with international humanitarian law by all parties, a freeze of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and a genuine discussion about the future with a negotiated political solution, including a Palestinian state that encompasses the occupied Palestinian territory.

In parallel, there must be justice and accountability for both the atrocities of Oct. 7, including the taking of hostages, and the disproportionate killing of civilians and the destruction of Gaza. Without this there will not be peace and stability. The International Criminal Court should investigate and adjudicate evidence of alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Governments around the world should act decisively. Otherwise international humanitarian law will become simply the law of the strongest. We must hold accountable those who deliberately infringe it, weaponize humanitarian aid and defame humanitarian organizations with the aim of weakening assistance and the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

The original purpose of international humanitarian aid, a concept conceived after the First World War, was to alleviate the suffering of civilians during wars and conflicts. Today, however, humanitarian aid is a strategic dimension of foreign policy and diplomatic competition—an instrument of power and war.

In Gaza, humanitarian assistance is being manipulated to serve political and military objectives, another breach among many in

By PHILIPPE LAZZARINI
Los Angeles Times



Philippe Lazzarini is the commissioner general of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which provides assistance and protection for Palestinian refugees in the Near East.

this war. Humanitarian aid must be kept independent and impartial. To do so, we must remain focused on the principle of alleviating the suffering of civilians, whoever and wherever they are.

WHY From page 8

imperfect, but it does take pains to collect vast arrays of input from intelligence assets, analysts, generals, think tanks, congressional committees and Cabinet officials. I spent hundreds of hours in conference rooms with colleagues debating the meaning of reports and their associated threat levels, leaving no unpopular perspective overlooked before sending an analysis to a superior. My fellow analysts and I had the autonomy to identify threats and interpret them in our own words.

Authoritarian leaders who brook no dissent, by contrast, often make world-changing decisions for the worse. Netanyahu's mismanagement of his country's security could shove his people into a multifront regional war and lead to his ouster.

The international community and particularly the United States could have acted to rein in his authoritarianism years ago and pressured him toward a less catastrophic outcome. Instead we're contending with the fallout of another strongman's disastrous misapprehension of his

PUT From page 8

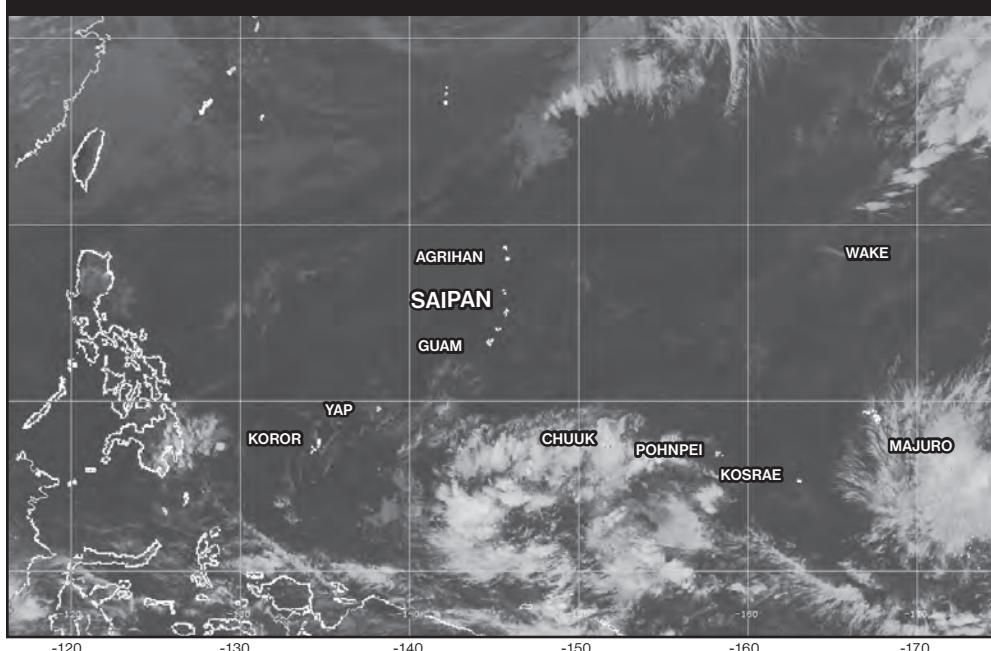
might demand. She's married, has and wants kids and is not considering the termination of a viable pregnancy. That he nonetheless wants her to potentially die—and is intending to prosecute anyone who might help her not die—should be a crystal clear signal that Paxton and his extremist ilk can never be satisfied. Their anti-choice campaign must be defeated decisively, in the courts, at the ballot box and in our moral calculus as a society.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.
86	77°	86	77°	86
86	77°	86	77°	86

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:58 AM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows partly cloudy skies and isolated showers within the Marianas Waters, with higher amounts of clouds and showers south of Guam Waters. The buoys reveal combined seas of 5 to 7 feet which are currently building, composed of a medium east-northeast trade-wind swell and medium wind waves, along with a smaller north-northeast swell.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA		
	▲	▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	88° / 79°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	88° / 80°
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	89° / 80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	86° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Majuro	Cloudy	85° / 78°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:34 AM	5:48 PM
Friday	6:34 AM	5:48 PM
Saturday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Sunday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Monday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	7:38 AM	6:58 PM	-
Friday	8:39 AM	8:03 PM	-
Saturday	9:36 AM	9:08 PM	-
Sunday	10:27 AM	10:10 PM	-
Monday	11:13 AM	11:08 PM	-

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website: www.saipantribune.com.

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AROUND THE GLOBE

	▲	▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	75° / 64°
Beijing	Sunny	36° / 18°
Hong Kong	Cloudy	68° / 55°
Honolulu	Showers	76° / 67°
London	Partly Cloudy	39° / 32°
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	79° / 51°
Manila	Showers	81° / 73°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	77° / 55°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	76° / 64°
New York	Cloudy	33° / 30°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	52° / 36°
Paris	Showers	43° / 34°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	41° / 21°
Rome	Showers	55° / 54°
Salem	Mostly Sunny	60° / 37°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	61° / 49°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	30° / 12°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	55° / 37°
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	38° / 30°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET

2:16 AM	Low Tide	-0.75
9:36 AM	High Tide	1.78
2:46 PM	Low Tide	1.21
7:24 PM	High Tide	1.78

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS		
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN		
UA076	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM Daily
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN		
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1 2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM		
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM 3, 6
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1 Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1 2, 5 via Palau
				UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN		
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1 3, 6 via Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1 2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1 Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203</					

Business

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

RJ Pizza Restaurant has opened at the old LBC Express Inc. location in Garapan.

Owner Romeo Bautista said adding a new branch in Garapan to supplement their Sugar King Park one was made to accommodate more customers as the new location is more accessible and has more foot traffic.

RJ Pizza's claim to fame is its home-made pizza with traditional toppings like ham and cheese, pepperoni, Hawaiian, chicken, special, and meat lovers. It also sells sweet Filipino-style spaghetti and crispy fried chicken.

Its current menu is chockful of affordable combo meals that perfectly pairs its one-of-a-kind chicken, spaghetti, and pizza dishes.

Customers can pair chicken with spaghetti, chicken with rice, chicken with pizza, or go the full nine yards with pizza, chicken, and spaghetti or pizza, chicken, and rice combos.

It also offers its famous chicken in buckets of eight, 10, and 12 pieces and chicken singles with fries.

Aside from the usual soft drinks and bottled water, diners at RJ Pizza Restaurant can also quench their thirst with newly introduced fruit shakes.

Asked why he made the move to a bigger location despite the economy not fully recovered following the COVID-19 pandemic, Bautista said he just wants to give people an affordable place to eat.

"We're also affected by economic crisis, but we have a menu that I think would help the community with our

RJ Pizza Restaurant opens at old LBC Garapan site



MARK RABAGO

RJ Pizza Restaurant's new location at the former LBC Express Inc. location is right across D'Elegance Cafe in Garapan.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

RJ Pizza Restaurant's Hawaiian pizza, fried chicken, and spaghetti combo meal.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

RJ Pizza Restaurant's bestselling pepperoni pizza.



Commonwealth Zoning Board Meeting

December 28, 2023 | 2:30 PM
Multi-Purpose Center • Susupe, Saipan
Tel: 670-234-9661/2 • Fax: 670-234-9666
E-mail: ZoningBoard@cnmzoning.com

AGENDA

A. Preliminary Matters

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of 12/28/2023 Meeting Agenda
4. Adoption of 12/07/2023 Special Meeting Minutes
5. Communications
6. Public Comments (not for items to be discussed in item B. Public Hearings)

B. Public Hearings:

1. **Conditional Use Application #2023-1260** – Green Meadow School is proposing to renovate and occupy two (2) detached pre-existing structures for its "School, Private" Use. This use is permitted in the area as a Conditional Use. The site is located on Lot No. 007 H 01 in the village of Chalan Kanoa. This area is zoned as Village Residential.

2. **Conditional Use Application #2023-1645** – Top Shelf, LLC is proposing to amend Conditional Use Permit No. 2020-10297 to include an Outdoor Growing area for its "Cannabis Farm" Use. This use is permitted in the area as a Conditional Use. The site is located on Lot No. 053 E 11 in the village of As Teo. This area is zoned as Rural.

C. Old Business

1. **Zoning Board and Office comments on Proposed House Local Bill 23-XX** – To amend the Saipan Official Zoning Map sheet 17 of 29 to rezone certain districts to "Tourist Resort"; and for other purposes, by Chairman John Paul Sablan.

D. New Business

1. Parking regulations in Garapan Core (GC), Garapan East (GE), Village Commercial (VC), and other zoning districts.

E. Zoning Administrator's Report

1. Operations (Permitting and Enforcement)
2. Zoning's Clean-Healthy-Attractive-Safe Campaign
3. Fiscal Years 2023 Budget
4. Zoning FY23 Citizen Centric Report
5. Update on proposed Blighted Properties regulations, as authorized by Saipan Local Law 20-25, prior to commencement of full enforcement actions on January 01, 2024
6. Update on Zoning Office Buildings Renovations, Capitol Hill
7. Proposed Resolutions for Board Adoption
 - a. To correct the title of the law from "Saipan Zoning Law of 2013-As amended" to "Saipan Zoning Law of 2020" for publication (as authorized under SZA Section 1309)
 - b. To adopt proposed changes to Article 4. Table of Uses for transmittal to the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation

1. To include Cannabis Manufacturing and Processing as a conditional use within Rural, VC, MC, and Industrial zones.
2. To include Furniture Stores as a permitted use in VC, MC, Industrial, GC, GE, and Beach Road zoning districts.

- c. To rescind official Zoning communication dated August 2021 to surveyors and agencies regarding the suspension of Article 11. Land Development and Subdivision
- d. To implement immediate removal of signboards at intersections on major and secondary roadways, and limit the placement and maximum size for directional signs
- e. To impose requirements on Rezone process
 - 1.) Expiration date to commence development after adoption of Rezone applications by the Commonwealth Zoning Board and the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation

F. Executive Session

G. Adjournment

/s/ Henry S. Hofsneider, Chairman



NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Green Meadow School

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for a Conditional Use Permit. Green Meadow School is proposing to renovate and occupy two (2) detached pre-existing structures for its "School, Private" Use. This use is permitted in the area as a Conditional Use. The site is located on Lot No. 007 H 01 in the village of Chalan Kanoa. This area is zoned as Village Residential.

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: Dec. 28, 2023
Time: 2:30 pm
Place: Governor Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 3 pm, Dec. 27, 2023. Please send written comments via e-mail to zoningboard@cnmzoning.com, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 5911 Chalan Pale Arnold, Chalan Laulau (former IT&E).

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

/s/ Henry S. Hofsneider, Chairman



NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Top Shelf, LLC

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for a Conditional Use Permit. Top Shelf, LLC is proposing to amend Conditional Use Permit No. 2020-10297 to include an Outdoor Growing area for its "Cannabis Farm" Use. This use is permitted in the area as a Conditional Use. The site is located on Lot No. 053 E 11 in the village of As Teo. This area is zoned as Rural.

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: Dec. 28, 2023
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/s/ Henry S. Hofsneider, Chairman

Nation

Biden criticizes Israel's 'indiscriminate bombing' of Gaza

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden on Tuesday warned that Israel was losing international support because of its “indiscriminate bombing” of Gaza, speaking out in unusually strong language just hours before the United Nations demanded a humanitarian ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war.

“Israel’s security can rest on the United States, but right now it has more than the United States. It has the European Union, it has Europe, it has most of the world supporting them,” Biden said to donors during a fundraiser Tuesday.

“They’re starting to lose that support by indiscriminate bombing that takes place,” he said.

The president said he thought Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu understood, but he wasn’t so sure about the Israeli war cabinet. Israeli forces were carrying out punishing strikes across Gaza, crushing Palestinians in homes as the military presses ahead with an offensive that officials say could go on for weeks or months.

Biden offered a harder-than-usual assessment of Israel’s decisions since the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas and the moves by his conservative government. Meanwhile, Biden’s top national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, is heading to Israel this week to consult directly about timetables for ending major combat.



President Joe Biden speaks at a Hanukkah reception in the East Room of the White House in Washington, Monday, Dec. 11, 2023.

The president also renewed his warnings that Israel should not make the same mistakes of overreaction that the U.S. did following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

He recounted a familiar anecdote about inscribing on a photo with Netanyahu decades ago, “Bibi, I don’t agree with a damn thing you have to say.” This time, the president added to his retelling of the story: “That remains to be the case.”

The 2024 campaign fundraiser was part of a gathering of Jewish donors, many of whom attended a White

House Hanukkah reception on Monday evening; Biden’s fundraisers are open to some reporters on the condition that no audio or video be shared.

Hours later, during a press conference with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Biden refrained from offering the same public criticism again, but said that he had made it clear to Israel “the safety of innocent Palestinians is still of great concern.”

“The actions they’re taking must be consistent with attempting to do everything possible to prevent innocent

Palestinian civilians from being hurt, murdered, killed, lost,” Biden said, adding, that it was important to remember “what we’re doing here.”

“We’re here to support Israel because they’re an independent nation and the way in which Hamas treated Israel is beyond comparison,” the president said.

Biden’s rhetoric to donors tracks his more candid and private messaging to Netanyahu on their frequent calls, according to two White House officials, where he reassures U.S. support for Israel before pushing for Israel to do more

to help civilians in Gaza.

“Israel has a tough decision to make. Bibi has a tough decision to make. There’s no question about the need to take on Hamas. There’s no question about that. None. Zero,” Biden said. But he added, of Israel’s leader, “I think he has to change his government. His

government in Israel is making it very difficult.”

Biden specifically called out Itamar Ben-Gvir, the leader of a far-right Israeli party and the minister of national security in Netanyahu’s governing coalition, who opposes a two-state solution and has called for Israel to reassert control over all of the West Bank and Gaza. Ben-Gvir sits on Israel’s security cabinet, but is not a member of the country’s three-person war cabinet.

The comments prompted responses from both the Israeli military and also Hamas.

“We know to explain exactly how we operate with precision, based on intelligence, even when we are operating on the ground,” said Israeli military spokesperson Daniel Hagari. “We know how to operate against the Hamas strongholds in such a way that best separates the uninvolved civilians from terrorism targets.”

Asked about Biden’s comments, a senior Hamas official said in Beirut that “the resistance and the steadfastness of the Palestinian people have made Biden understand that the Israeli military operation is a crazy act.”

George Santos attorney expresses optimism about plea deal talks

CENTRAL ISLIP, N.Y. (AP)—Former U.S. Rep. George Santos’ lawyer expressed optimism about plea negotiations in Santos’ criminal fraud case Tuesday, successfully fending off prosecutors’ attempts to speed up the ousted congressman’s trial.

In Santos’ first court appearance since he was expelled from Congress earlier this month, his attorney, Joseph Murray, argued that it was premature to bring the September trial forward while the two parties were in talks to resolve the case.

“We should focus on the plea deal. I believe they can be fruitful,” Murray told Judge Joanna Seybert in the federal court in Long Island. He also argued that he was “struggling” to keep up with “voluminous materials” produced by the government during the discovery process.

The motion, which glosses over the fact that Trump was the intended beneficiary of Russian interference in 2016, is pending. Even if it’s unlikely Trump’s lawyers will be able to persuade Chutkan to order prosecutors to produce the materials, the request opens a window into a line of defense the team could raise.

In a response, federal prosecutors said they were not in possession of the classified information being demanded and that the request was part of an effort to delay the case. They also say there’s no evidence the 2020 race was tainted by foreign interference.

ing to one, “It’s cold, go home.”

Santos earlier this month became only the sixth lawmaker in history to be expelled from the U.S. House of Representatives.

In an interview with WABC radio that aired early Tuesday morning, Santos said he hopes to eventually regain the trust of the American people and return to public office.

“I’m not done with public service, I want to go back to Congress,” he said. “I’m not saying today, I’m not saying tomorrow. I’m 35, I have a lot of things I need to take care of first, I think we all know.”

The ex-lawmaker faces a slew of criminal charges, including allegations that he defrauded campaign donors, lied to Congress about his wealth, received unemployment benefits while employed, and used campaign contributions to pay for personal expenses like designer clothing. Among the charges are allegations that he made unauthorized charges on credit cards belonging to some of his donors.

Santos pleaded not guilty to a revised indictment in October.

Prosecutors revealed in a court filing Monday that they were negotiating with Santos to potentially resolve his criminal case without a trial.

How 2016 election could factor into case accusing Trump of trying to overturn the 2020 race

WASHINGTON (AP)—To hear his lawyers tell it, Donald Trump was alarmed by Russia’s interference in the 2016 election, motivated as president to focus on cybersecurity and had a good-faith basis four years later to worry that foreign actors had again meddled in the race.

But to federal prosecutors, 2016 is significant as the year that Trump spread misinformation about voter fraud and proved himself resistant to accepting the outcome of elections that might not go his way.

Even though a trial set for next year in Washington is centered on Trump’s efforts to overturn the 2020 election, lawyers on both sides have signaled their desire—for totally different purposes—to draw attention to the tumultuous presidential contest four years earlier as a way to help explain his state of mind after his loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

“When we’re talking about someone’s belief or mental state, there is usually no one piece of evidence that is dispositive,” said David Aaron, a for-

mer Justice Department national security prosecutor. “There’s usually multiple data points that each side will argue indicates one mental state or the other.”

The callback to the 2016 race is perhaps not surprising given the history-making events of that year, when Russian operatives hacked Democratic emails and orchestrated their release with what U.S. officials say was a goal of aiding Trump over his Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton. The meddling and its aftermath thrust the topic of election security and faith in democratic processes to the forefront of American discourse.

It will ultimately be up to U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan to determine what evidence is admissible at trial and what materials defense lawyers are entitled to get from prosecutors as part of the information-sharing process known as discovery. Special counsel Jack Smith’s team says information about the 2016 election being sought by the defense is “wholly irrelevant” to the current case while telling Trump’s lawyers and the

community that it wants to present evidence about Trump’s history of claiming fraud.

The interest in 2016 was laid bare in recent court filings, including one in which defense lawyers made a long-shot request to force prosecutors to turn over all materials, including a classified version of a U.S. intelligence assessment, related to Russian interference and influence operations in that election.

They say the intelligence community’s 2017 assessment that Russia’s efforts to influence the race reflected a “significant escalation” by the Kremlin has direct bearing on Trump’s confidence, or lack thereof, in the security of the 2020 election and helps explain the basis for him to have been “skeptical about the absence of foreign influence” in that year’s race.

They also contend that actions he took as president, including a 2018 executive order imposing sanctions for foreign election interference, show he took the subject seriously. And they argue that the intelligence community assessment that

Russia in 2016 sowed public discord shows Trump is not responsible for creating the environment prosecutors are now trying to “blame” him for.

“This evidence rebuts the position of the Special Counsel’s Office that President Trump’s actions between November 2020 and January 2021 were motivated by a desire to maintain office and undertaken with specific intent and unlawful purpose,” defense lawyers wrote.

The motion, which glosses over the fact that Trump was the intended beneficiary of Russian interference in 2016, is pending. Even if it’s unlikely Trump’s lawyers will be able to persuade Chutkan to order prosecutors to produce the materials, the request opens a window into a line of defense the team could raise.

In a response, federal prosecutors said they were not in possession of the classified information being demanded and that the request was part of an effort to delay the case. They also say there’s no evidence the 2020 race was tainted by foreign interference.

Asia

UN AGENCY SAYS:

War-wracked Myanmar now world's top opium producer

BANGKOK (AP)—Myanmar, already wracked by a brutal civil war, has regained the unenviable title of the world's biggest opium producer, according to a U.N. agency report released Tuesday.

The Southeast Asian country's opium output has topped that of Afghanistan, where the ruling Taliban imposed a ban on its production, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime said in its "Southeast Asia Opium Survey 2023."

The Taliban's ban has led to a 95% drop in the cultivation of opium poppies, UNODC said last month. Opium, the base from which morphine and heroin are produced, is harvested from poppy flowers.

From 2022 to 2023, Myanmar saw the estimated amount of land used to grow the illicit crop increase 18% to 47,100 hectares (116,400 acres), the new UNODC report said.

"Although the area under cultivation has not returned to historic peaks of nearly 58,000 ha (143,300 acres) cultivated in 2013, after three consecutive years of increases, poppy cultivation in Myanmar is expanding and becoming more productive," it said.

It also noted that the estimated opium yield expanded by 16% to 22.9 kilograms

per hectare (20.43 pounds per acre)—topping the previous record set in 2022. It attributes that increase to "increasingly sophisticated means of cultivation, including increased plot density, improved organization of plants, and enhanced practices, such as the use of irrigation systems and potentially fertilizers."

The violent political turmoil in Myanmar has contributed to the opium production increase. "The economic, security and governance disruptions that followed the military takeover of February 2021 continue to drive farmers in remote areas towards opium to make a living," UNODC Regional Representative Jeremy Douglas said.

The report notes that "opium poppy cultivation in Southeast Asia is closely linked to poverty, lack of government services, challenging macroeconomic environments, instability, and insecurity." For farmers, the bottom line is simple economics.

UNODC said the average price paid to opium growers increased by 27% to about \$355 per kilogram (\$161 per pound), demonstrating the attractiveness of opium as a crop and commodity and strong demand.

Suicide bomber kills 23, wounds 32 in police station attack in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP)—A suicide bomber detonated his explosive-laden vehicle at a police station's main gate in northwestern Pakistan early Tuesday, killing at least 23 troops, wounding 32 and causing a part of the building to collapse, authorities said.

The attack—one of the deadliest in recent months in Pakistan—also damaged businesses and shops nearby. A newly formed militant group—Tehreek-e-Jihad Pakistan, believed to be an offshoot of the Pakistani Taliban—claimed responsibility for the attack.

The military and local police said six other attackers were also involved in the assault at the police station, triggering an hourslong shootout before all six were killed.

Some of the wounded officers were said to be in critical condition, and there were fears the death toll would rise. Mohammad Adnan, a senior police official, said the casualties

were taken to a local hospital.

Later, the army said in a statement that "troops killed 27 insurgents" in multiple operations in the same region Tuesday.

The attack targeted Daraian police station in the city of Dera Ismail Khan, according to local officer Kamal Khan. The city is located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which borders Afghanistan and which is a former stronghold of the Pakistani Taliban.

Khan said a large number of security forces from across Pakistan were recently deployed at the station for intelligence operations against militants in the area in coordination with the local police.

The militant offshoot said in its claim of responsibility that it targeted officers who were at the police station.

Mehrban Khan, who owns a hotel next to the police station, described the scene, saying he saw "many army soldiers

killed and wounded."

Pakistani President Arif Alvi denounced the attack and expressed his condolences to the families of those killed, saying "their sacrifices would not go to waste" and that such attacks would not weaken the resolve of security forces.

Pakistan's caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti also denounced the attack as an "act of terrorism."

In separate developments Tuesday, two soldiers and four insurgents were killed in a shootout in the northwestern town of Kulachi, the military said.

The surge in militant attacks on Pakistani security forces—many by the Pakistani Taliban—have strained relations between Islamabad and Afghanistan's Taliban rulers in Kabul. Islamabad says the Pakistani Taliban have become emboldened since their Afghan Taliban allies' takeover of the neighboring country in 2021.

Many Pakistani Taliban members are living openly in Afghanistan, and Pakistan wants their extradition.

World

Ukraine faces heavy attack from the air and cyberspace



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, center, walks with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky., left, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of N.Y., right, during a visit to Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023. AP

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Ukraine came under heavy attack from the air and from cyberspace on Tuesday, local officials said, as nearly 600 Russian shells,

» While Zelenskyy in US presses for more funding

rockets and other projectiles rained down on a southern region and unidentified hackers knocked out phone and internet services of the country's biggest telecom provider.

Ukraine also claimed a successful hacker attack against Russia's national tax system.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived on Capitol Hill to press U.S. Congress for additional military help, as further U.S. funding is uncertain because of a domestic political dispute.

One person was killed and four others were wounded during 24 hours of Russian bombardment of Ukraine's southern Kherson region, according to Oleksandr Prokudin, head of the regional military administration. The

number of projectiles fired at Kherson was the highest in at least two weeks.

As winter sets in and hampers troop movements, allowing little change along the front line, air bombardment plays a growing role in the war.

Cyberattacks are also a busy battleground. Ukrainian telecom provider Kyivstar said it came under a "powerful" attack by hackers. The company serves more than 24 million mobile customers across the country.

"The war with Russia has many dimensions, and one of them is in cyberspace," Kyivstar Director-General Oleksandr Komarov said in a statement.

The company didn't estimate when services might be restored. It said its specialists were working with law enforcement agencies and special state services on solving the problem.

Kyivstar's traffic began dropping at 9 a.m. local

time and was nearly at zero by noon, Doug Madory, an analyst at the network integrity firm Kentic Inc., said in a tweet.

"Traffic was slow decline instead of being abruptly cut all at once," Madory told The Associated Press. He said that was similar to what happened in a March 2022 cyberattack on Ukrtelecom, the country's legacy telecom, which was then seventh among Ukrainian providers in internet traffic volume.

Kyivstar is Ukraine's largest destination for internet traffic, Madory said.

But the attack had more far-reaching consequences. It disrupted the air raid warning system in part of the Kyiv region, according to the head of the Kyiv regional administration, Ruslan Kravchenko. Similar disruptions were also reported in the Sumy region of northeastern Ukraine, while some ATMs of state-owned Oshchadbank stopped working as a result of the Kyivstar attack, the bank's press office told local news outlet Suspilne.

UN General Assembly votes overwhelmingly to demand a humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The U.N. General Assembly voted overwhelmingly on Tuesday to demand a humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza in a strong demonstration of global support for ending the Israel-Hamas war. The vote also showed the growing isolation of the United States and Israel.

The vote in the 193-member world body was 153 in favor, 10 against and 23 abstentions, and ambassadors and other diplomats burst into applause as the final numbers were displayed. The United States and Israel were joined in opposing the resolution by eight countries—Austria, Czechia, Guatemala, Liberia,

Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay.

The support was much higher than for an Oct. 27 Arab-sponsored resolution that called for a "humanitarian truce" leading to a cessation of hostilities, where the vote was 120-14 with 45 abstentions.

"Today was a historic day in terms of the powerful message that was sent from the General Assembly," Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian U.N. ambassador, said after the vote. "And it is our collective duty to continue in this path until we see an end to this aggression against our people, to see this war stopping against our people. It is our duty to save lives."

The United States has

grown increasingly isolated in its support for Israel's military campaign in Gaza after Hamas militants killed about 1,200 people and abducted about 240 in a surprise attack on Oct. 7.

More than the United Nations or any other international organization, the United States is seen as the only entity capable of persuading Israel to accept a cease-fire as its closest ally and biggest supplier of weaponry.

In tougher language than usual, though, President Joe Biden warned before the vote that Israel was losing international support because of its "indiscriminate bombing" of Gaza.

Environment

Endangered species list grows by 2,000. Climate change is part of the problem

By MICHAEL PHILLIS

Associated Press

Climate change is worsening the planet's biodiversity crises, making environments more deadly for thousands of species and accelerating the precipitous decline in the number of plants and animals on Earth, according to an international organization that tracks species health.

Species of salmon and turtles are among those facing a decline as the planet warms.

Atlantic salmon isn't yet threatened with extinction, but its population dropped by nearly a quarter from 2006 to 2020, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, which tracks biodiversity around the globe, said on Monday. It's now considered near threatened. They live in fewer places and face human-created hazards like dams and water pollution. Climate change is making it harder for the fish to find food and easier for alien species to compete, according to the group. Although there are some signs of hope: their

numbers ticked up in Maine this past year.

The news was announced at the United Nations climate conference in the United Arab Emirates on Monday. Leaders of the IUCN updated their Red List of Threatened Species, a tracker of biodiversity around the globe. It was mainly bad news. The list includes information on 157,000 species, about 7,000 more than last year's update.

The IUCN said just over

44,000 species are threatened with extinction. That's roughly 2,000 more than last year.

"Species around the world are under huge pressure. So no matter where you look, the numbers of threatened species are rising," said Craig Hilton-Taylor, head of the Red List unit at the IUCN.

Climate change is worsening conditions for about 6,700 species threatened with extinction.

The Central South Pacific and East Pacific green turtle is at greater risk because of climate change, for example. Fewer turtles hatch as higher



MARTIN MEJIA/AP

A captive frog, of the *Telmatobius Culeus* species, moves inside of a glass box at Huachipa Zoo, on the outskirts of Lima, Peru, Nov. 6, 2019.

seas inundate nests. Warming waters can harm its food supply of seagrasses.

The update includes the first broad assessment of the health of freshwater fish species. One-quarter of species — just over 3,000 — face an extinction risk. As climate change raises sea levels, salt water is

traveling further up rivers, for example. And these species already face tremendous threats from pollution and overfishing, the IUCN said.

Frogs, salamanders and other amphibians are suffering the most. About 41% of these species are under threat.

"They are climate captives

because of higher temperatures, drought — whatever happens amphibians cannot move out of harm's way and are directly impacted by climate change," said Vivek Menon, deputy chair of the IUCN's species survival commission.

There was a bit of good

news. Two antelope species are fairing better, although they still have a long way to go before their long-term survival is stabilized. For example, the scimitar-horned oryx, a light-colored animal with curved horns, had previously been categorized as extinct in the wild but is now endangered. It faced a lot of threats: poaching, drought and car accidents all played a role in largely eliminating the species by the turn of the century. But recent efforts to reintroduce the species in Chad have helped and there are now at least 140 adults and more than twice as many calves on a large nature reserve.

IUCN's director general Grethel Aguilar said it's clear humans need to act to protect biodiversity and when conservation is done right, it works. To combat the threat posed by climate change, she said fossil fuels need to be phased out, a contentious focus of this year's COP28 negotiations.

"Nature is here to help us, so let us help it back," she said.

chemical pesticides that has accompanied climate change. Jeevamutra, made from neem leaves, cow urine and chickpea flour, is an eco-friendly treatment rooted in centuries-old practices.

"We have presented to the Indian delegation to propose our solution to other developing countries, these have been solutions for us for centuries and can be relevant more than ever now due to climate change," she said.

Shehnaaz Mossa, who oversees finance at South-SouthNorth, a nonprofit that facilitates climate-resilient development, said it's important to connect the meaningful efforts happening at the community level with larger discussions. Local communities, she said, understand their needs and have the knowledge to scale up solutions effectively.

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, a Chadian environmental activist and geographer, emphasized the importance of combining traditional knowledge with science to create effective solutions.

"There is a need to get women from the Indigenous communities on the negotiation table because we have the solution and we are already implementing it on ground," she said during a session focused on women's contributions to building a climate-resilient world.

Indigenous women have a message for world leaders: Look at what we're doing. And listen



UZMI ATHAR/AP

Jasumatiben Jethabai Parmar, an indigenous woman, explains how the organic insecticide developed by her can help fight rise in pest attacks due to climate change, at the COP28 U.N. Climate Summit, Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—With a sprig of leaves and rainwater carried from her island in the Philippines, Grace Talawag delivered a prayer and a blessing for her delegation and onlookers in a negotiation hall at the United Nations climate summit. The leaves included bamboo, to represent the resiliency needed to contend with climate change, and jade vine, a creeping plant that Talawag said "will climb any tree up in the jungle to see the light."

The latter symbolizes her

hope that negotiators at the COP28 talks "will listen to the voices of the Indigenous people"—especially Indigenous women who have traveled to the conference to share valuable insights into addressing some of the challenges of climate change.

Frontline communities will exchange their best practices at the climate talks. But they'd still like to see a more inclusive summit that makes them an integral part of the global dialogue, Talawag said.

"Even in the loss and damage fund we are not on board

but just present as observers," she said, referring to an agreement finalized on the eve of the talks for compensating developing nations hit by climate extremes. "This needs to change."

Briseida Iglesias, 68, of Panama, spearheaded a woman-led movement, the Bundorgan Women Network, that came up with a way to cultivate eucalyptus plants to reduce soil salinity—a major problem in coastal areas where seas are rising now because of planetary warming. The group did so by using ancestral knowledge of medicinal plants and planting those in combination with the eucalyptus.

On the grand stage of COP28, Iglesias hopes this solution can be showcased to



UZMI ATHAR/AP
Dipayan Dey, chairman of the South Asian Forum for Environment, presents a floating farms model at the COP28 U.N. Climate Summit, Saturday, Dec. 2, 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

benefit other countries.

"We can't wait for governments to act," she said.

In Bangladesh, Indigenous women devised a different

solution to the encroaching seas that threaten to spoil the land of farmers already living under the poverty line. They're using float farms and rafts to grow organic agricultural products, said Dipayan Dey, chairman of the South Asian Forum for Environment (SAFE), which helped the community to scale up the project.

"The concept of floating farms has expanded to the Sundarbans areas of India and also in Cambodia, offering a relevant solution for other countries struggling with rising salinity," he said.

From the Indian state of Gujarat, Jasumatiben Jethabai Parmar detailed a safer alternative to the increased use of



UZMI ATHAR/AP
Briseida Iglesias, an indigenous tribes leader from Panama, poses for a photo at the COP28 U.N. Climate Summit, Monday, Dec. 4, 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Life & Style

Tony Shalhoub returns as everyone's favorite OC sleuth

NEW YORK (AP)—Fourteen years ago, Tony Shalhoub said goodbye to one of his most beloved creations—the obsessive-compulsive private detective Adrian Monk. Monk's last TV appearance in 2009 was even called “Mr. Monk and the End.”

There was talk over the years of a potential reboot and some possible scripts were floated. But Shalhoub said there wasn't enough of a compelling reason to return to his phobia-obsessed character.

Then the pandemic hit.

Monk suddenly wasn't the only germaphobe wiping down their groceries, stocking up on antibacterial wipes and shuddering at the sight of crowded places.

“Monk, in a way, was the canary in the coal mine,” Shalhoub tells The Associated Press. “He seemed so out of touch and so neurotic and so forth. The pandemic was the great equalizer. Everybody got to sort of see the world through Monk's eyes.”

Viewers have caught up with Monk and so fans get another goodbye with the 90-minute “Mr. Monk's Last Case: A Monk Movie” hitting Peacock on Friday.

Shalhoub reunites on a new murder case with a millionaire as the prime suspect and original stars Ted Levine, Traylor Howard, Jason Gray-Stanford, Melora Hardin and Hector Elizondo.

Shalhoub laughs that when the rock band Eagles got back together in 1994, founding member Glenn Frey said they'd never broke up, they just took a 14-year vacation.



AP

Actor Tony Shalhoub poses for a portrait to promote the Peacock film “Mr. Monk's Last Case: A Monk Movie,” Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023, in West Hollywood, Calif.

“That's how I felt at the first table read when we all got back together again. We just kind of folded right back into it.”

Monk helped the San Francisco Police Department solve crimes because his fixations enable him to observe things that others overlook. He walked away after solving his last case—the murder of his beloved wife.

When we reconnect with Monk, it is present day and he's emerged from the pandemic, having spent most of it in a full protective suit and using in-home rapid tests every 20 minutes. Outside, hand sanitizer use is booming. “Everyone is you,” he is told. “They're gonna hate it,” he replies.

Monk is in a moody place, no longer detecting and lonely. He wrote a memoir but burned through editors and ghost writers. His obsession

with details—including nine pages about a suspect's vacuum cleaner—has prompted his publisher to scrap the book and ask for his advance back. So Monk is reevaluating

ing his life and his career.

“When we're young, everything's in front of us. And then when we're in our middle ages, we feel more settled in the present. But then as we

move beyond that, we mostly are looking backwards. We're looking behind us and we're reassessing and reevaluating,” Shalhoub says.

“You know, ‘What have I done? What has been my footprint and my impact?’ And I think that's exactly where Monk is: ‘What has all this meant? What have we really accomplished?’ That further perpetuates these very dark thoughts that he's having.”

Shalhoub collected three Emmy Awards for his work as Monk over eight seasons. After the show ended in 2009,

Shalhoub went on to earn three Tony Award nominations, winning in 2018 for “The Band's Visit” and starred in “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel,” winning another Emmy.

He suspects Monk—an unlikely hero in these Marvel days—has been embraced by legions of fans because he has flaws and insecurities, but manages to push through them.

“He uses them and turns them into an asset. Actually, for Monk, they become this superpower in a way,” Shalhoub says. “He doesn't know where he fits into the general society. So he's kind of always sort of like walking alongside of humanity and society. Maybe that also makes him a bit relatable.”

He adds: “I always hear about adolescents and young teens relating to him, too, because that's such a time of life being feeling socially awkward and feeling you're not really a child, you're not really a grown up.”

Shalhoub also suspects there's a little OCD in all of us, whether it's being annoyed by the placement of something or an odd interaction on the street that sticks in your head.

“Maybe it's a crooked picture frame on a wall. Not all of us may go over and straighten that frame, but good luck trying to keep your eyes off of it, you know?”

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Novelist's book is canceled after she acknowledges 'review bombs' of other writers

NEW YORK (AP)—A debut author who used fake accounts to “review bomb” other writers on the influential online platform Goodreads has been dropped by her agent and had her book deal cancelled. Cait Corrain's novel “Crown of Starlight” had been scheduled to come out next year through Del Rey, a science fiction and fantasy imprint of Penguin Random House. Both Del Rey and Corrain's agent, Becca

Podos, announced this week that they would no longer work with Corrain, who had a two-book deal. On Tuesday, days after the scandal broke online among Goodreads users, the author posted an apology on Instagram, blaming her actions in part on struggles with mental health and substance abuse. Corrain acknowledged using multiple pseudonyms to disparage such novels as Bethany Baptiste's “The Poisons We Drink” and Molly X. Chang's “To Gaze Upon Wicked Gods,” a Del Rey book.

Tucker Carlson is launching his own streaming network

NEW YORK (AP)—Ousted Fox News host Tucker Carlson is starting his own streaming service, promising to “tell the unadorned truth” to fans for \$72 a year, he announced Monday. Commentary, interviews, Carlson-flavored news reports and documentaries, even an advice show will be offered on the Tucker Carlson Network, which is essentially staffed by the people who used to work for him at Fox. The new

venture comes more than seven months after Fox abruptly fired Carlson, its most popular host. Fox never publicly explained the firing, and Carlson said on Monday that “it really is one of those mysteries that I'll probably never get to the bottom of.” “I want to wake up and say to myself, ‘You can say whatever you want,’” Carlson said, announcing his streaming service on The Megyn Kelly Show, a podcast and radio show hosted by fellow Fox News refugee Kelly, who has remade her career as an independent commentator.

Alzheimer's research needs volunteers for treatments

HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

DEAR DR. SPERLING: Thank you for your letter. Readers, more than 6 million Americans have Alzheimer's. Changing the trajectory of the disease before symptoms appear is an important scientific pursuit. Clinical trials hold the key to new and better Alzheimer's disease treatments.

Approximately 55,000 volunteers are needed for more than 180 clinical trials. In addition to the AHEAD study, the Alzheimer's Association offers TrialMatch, a free service that connects people living with dementia, caregivers and healthy volunteers to clinical trials. Clinical trial volunteers are key to better treatments, prevention strategies and a future cure for Alzheimer's disease. Visit trialmatch.alz.org or call 800-272-3900 to learn more.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My daughter is married with two kids. They live a few hours away. I love seeing them, but I have just one issue. She constantly corrects the way I pronounce words. No one ever mentioned it before she did. A lot of the pronunciations are how my family members and people in my state pronounce them.

She started criticizing me after she lived in three different states. It has reached a point where I dread seeing her. I feel self-conscious, and my self-esteem gets shot down every time I do. When I tell her it hurts me, she says I'm being

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

“too sensitive.” I don't know what I should do.

HURTING OVER THIS

DEAR HURTING: People who make comments that hurt other people's feelings and then tell them they are “too sensitive” are rude and passive-aggressive. What you should do is tell your arrogant daughter to knock it off because you have had it.

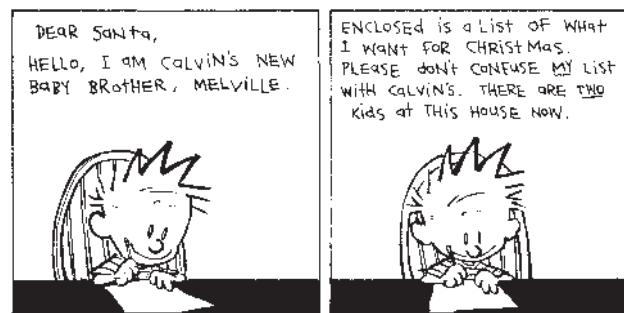
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To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

REISA SPERLING, M.D., PROFESSOR OF NEUROLOGY,

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Waterson

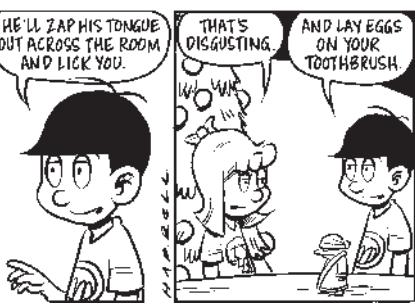


Garfield®



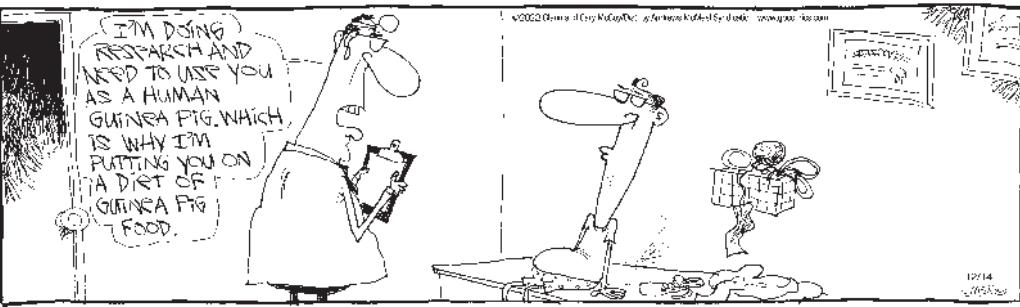
By Jim Davis

Adam@home



By Bryan Basset

The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS		34 Numerical prefix	58 Undraped	19 "Let It —"		
1 Cain's dad		35 Wine-and-soda drink	21 Prez on a penny	22 "Raging Bull" star	24 ER workers	25 Dadaist Jean
5 Red-carpet type		38 Molt	2 Prima donna	26 Model/actress Webb	27 Mouths (Lat.)	28 Squeeze (out)
8 Bard's river		39 Mouths (Lat.)	3 Pub orders	29 Wordiness	40 Bikini top	30 Before
12 Missile shelter		42 "Raging Bull" star	4 Back teeth	31 Punker Vicious	43 "Believer"	32 "Sad to say..."
13 Big bird		45 Meaning	5 Mexican city	33 Showy flowers	34 Work unit	44 "To say..."
14 Infamous emperor		49 Elevator name	6 —	35 Roofing goo	50 Pot pie morsel	55 Exceptional
15 Daring Knievel		50 Pot pie morsel	7 Gas station fixture	36 Planet with rings	52 Manual reader	56 "Sad to say..."
16 Zodiac animal		52 Manual reader	8 Advil alternative	41 ICU worker	53 Indy event	57 Dundee denial
17 Not pizzicato		53 Indy event	9 Martini ingredient	42 TV explorer	54 Work unit	10 Sea predator
18 Honeydew alter-native		54 Work unit	10 Sea predator	43 List-ending abbr.	55 Exceptional	11 Lunch hour
20 Classic arcade game		55 Exceptional	11 Lunch hour	44 Serving customers	56 "Sad to say..."	57 Dundee denial
22 VCR button		56 "Sad to say..."	12 Dundee denial	45 Notable time	58 Undraped	59 Notable time
23 Life story		57 Dundee denial	13 Dundee denial		59 Notable time	
24 Dallas team, to fans		58 Undraped	14 Dundee denial			
27 Balance sheet figures			15 Dundee denial			
32 Dad on "Blackish"			16 Dundee denial			
33 Luau instrument			17 Dundee denial			

Solution time: 24 mins.



Yesterday's answer 12-14

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:

Vanessa Hudgens, 35; Sophie Monk, 44; Beth Orton, 53; Dee Wallace, 75.

Happy Birthday: Target your goal and dart to the finish line. Turn on the charm, rely on your finesse and upbeat persona, and be straightforward but entertaining and honest if you want everything to fall into place. Let your stamina and persistence be your calling card. Trust your emotions, and focus on saving, eliminating debt and getting back on track. Your numbers are 3, 11, 16, 22, 28, 35, 43.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't let anger or animosity weigh you down. Concentrate on taking positive action and surrounding yourself with uplifting people. Gather facts; give others the same opportunities and respect that you want in return. Choose peace over chaos.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Dig deep, and you'll get the answers you seek. Enhance your knowledge and hone your skills to ensure you have what it takes to pursue your intentions. Call on your emotions to captivate your audience. Romance is favored.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Stick to the truth; if you exaggerate, someone will correct you, and if you believe everything you hear, you will be misinformed. Pay attention to what others want, and make gestures and suggestions to seal a commitment. Let your actions speak for you.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): A tried-and-true approach to relationships will bring you closer to others. Open discussions will drum up the help you require to make

your dreams come true. Taking your plans to the next level will change your outlook and timeline. Embrace love and romance.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Get into the spirit of the season, mix business with pleasure and listen carefully. A calm, practical outlook and showing interest in what others contribute will give you a healthy edge when it's time to make your next move. Recognize and dismiss a bluff.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't let anger set in when change is your best bet. Size up situations and make your move. A change of location, direction or atmosphere will lighten the mood and offer the clarity you require to make a sound decision with no fuss.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): A liberated view of what's unfolding will help you navigate the ups and downs you face.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Dig deep, and you'll get the answers you seek. Enhance your knowledge and hone your skills to ensure you have what it takes to pursue your intentions. Call on your emotions to captivate your audience. Romance is favored.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Stick to the truth; if you exaggerate, someone will correct you, and if you believe everything you hear, you will be misinformed. Pay attention to what others want, and make gestures and suggestions to seal a commitment. Let your actions speak for you.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): A tried-and-true approach to relationships will bring you closer to others. Open discussions will drum up the help you require to make

timing is everything. Be aware of what's happening around you, and prepare to take advantage of any change or opportunity that encourages connecting with someone who can contribute to your vision. Festive networking events will lead to chance meetings and unusual opportunities.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD
IN ASTROLOGYCOPRIGHT 2007
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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Let bygones be bygones and get along. Open your heart, home and mind to achieve a peaceful atmosphere for you and those you love. Focus on being your best and offering what you can to those in need. Love is favored.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Take care of pressing matters that influence your position or prospects. Put your energy where it counts, and take care of unfinished business before it's too late. Don't take risks that are subject to illness or injury. Keep life simple.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Exhibit financial control when shopping or trying to please the ones you love. It's better to play it safe and avoid debt than to try to buy love with lavish gifts. The greatest gifts you have to offer are kindness and love. Romance is favored.

Birthday Baby: You are tuned in, reliable and secretive. You are adaptable and productive.

•: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ♦♦: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ♦♦♦: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ♦♦♦♦: Aim high; start new projects. ♦♦♦♦♦: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

WONDERWORD

By DAVID
QUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

POST OFFICE BOXES

Solution: 9 letters

E	E	E	C	P	A	S	C	D	E	T	N	U	O	M
E	C	R	M	O	Z	I	P	C	O	D	E	R	I	
N	C	I	U	A	S	E	T	A	R	D	G	C	E	
V	S	A	F	C	N	T	Y	I	E	I	E	M	C	
E	T	F	L	F	E	K	T	Z	F	N	A	O	E	
L	N	D	E	P	O	S	I	T	E	I	U	A	I	
O	E	O	C	A	A	L	Y	L	L	N	S	D	V	
P	M	O	N	C	A	L	Y	B	T	G	Y	D	E	
E	T	R	A	I	H	H	O	R	T	N	E	R	L	
S	R	S	C	T	T	X	Y	C	E	F	K	E	O	
I	A	E	N	E	G	R	A	L	A	V	E	S	B	
N	P	O	Y	A	C	C	E	S	T	I	S	B	E	
S	M	L	O	C	K	E	D	G	S	I	I	L	Y	
N	O	I	T	A	C	I	L	P	P	A	Z	O	E	
P	C	O	M	B	I	N	T	O	N	E	N	D		

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12/14

Access, Address, Application, Cancel, Cast Iron, City, Combination, Compartments, Cost, Country, Delivery, Dimensions, Doors, Envelopes, Gift, Items, Keys, Large, Lobby, Location, Locked, Mailbox, Monthly, Mounted, Name, Office, Place, Polyethylene, Rates, Receive, Rent, Safe, Secure, Size, Specialized, Staff, Steel, ZIP Code

Yesterday's Answer: Technology

The NEW Treasury 57 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367.)

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

	6		3		7									
		7	4	2										
4	2		6		3									
2		4	6		7	3	9							
7						1								
	3													
	2	5	6		9	3								
8				6	4	5								
9		8	4			2								

Difficulty: ★★★

12/14

<tr

Tatum, Brown both drop 25 as Celtics top Cavaliers



BOSTON (AP)—Jayson Tatum had 25 points and 10 rebounds, Jaylen Brown also scored 25 and Boston remained unbeaten at home with a victory over Cleveland.

Kristaps Porzingis had 21 points and 10 rebounds, Derrick White added 17 points and Boston held Cleveland scoreless for a stretch of 2 minutes, 40 seconds in the fourth quarter while finally putting away the Cavaliers, who had played on the road the night before.

Donovan Mitchell had 29 points and Darius Garland scored 26 for the Cavaliers, who couldn't overcome the cold stretch in the fourth quarter. Cleveland was also out-rebounded 45-35 in the opener of a two-game series.

The teams play again Thursday in Boston.

NUGGETS 114, BULLS 106

CHICAGO (AP)—Reggie Jackson scored 25 points and short-handed Denver held off Chicago after Nuggets star Nikola Jokic was ejected in the second quarter.

Michael Porter Jr. had 17 points and Aaron Gordon finished with 14 points, seven rebounds and six assists, helping Denver to a gritty second straight win after a 129-122 victory at Atlanta on Monday night. Julian



Indiana Pacers forward Obi Toppin (1) is defended by Detroit Pistons guard Cade Cunningham (2) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, Dec. 11, 2023, in Detroit.

Strawther added 16 points.

Jackson made five 3-pointers as the reigning NBA champions went 14 for 30 from behind the arc. The Nuggets also beat the Bulls 123-101 in Denver on Nov. 4.

It was unclear what exactly Jokic did to warrant the ejec-

tion. It looked as if the two-time NBA MVP felt he was fouled when he missed a reverse layup with 1:12 left in the first half, and he said something in the direction of a referee as he made his way back down the court.

Coby White led Chicago

with 27 points, continuing his hot streak. Nikola Vucevic finished with 26 points and 16 rebounds.

MAVERICKS 127, LAKERS 125

DALLAS (AP)—Luka Doncic had 33 points and 17 as-

sists, Tim Hardaway Jr. scored a season-high 32 points and the Dallas Mavericks beat Los Angeles 127-125 on Tuesday night in the Lakers' first game since winning the inaugural In-Season Tournament.

Anthony Davis finished with 37 points and 11 re-

bounds, while LeBron James had 33 points, nine assists and eight boards as the Lakers' season-best four-game winning streak ended. LA erased a 15-point deficit early in the third quarter to set up an entertaining finish.

Dante Exum scored a season-high 26 points with a career-best seven 3-pointers on nine attempts, going 5 of 7 in the fourth quarter to help the Mavs stay in front. Austin Reaves had 22 for the Lakers.

With Doncic's All-Star sidekick, Kyrie Irving, sidelined a second consecutive game with a bruised right foot, Hardaway was 10 of 21 from the field, including 5 of 10 from 3, and 7 of 8 on free throws.

CLIPPERS 119, KINGS 98

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kawhi Leonard scored 31 points in three quarters, giving him 106 in his last three games, and Los Angeles routed Sacramento for its season-high fifth straight victory.

James Harden added 15 points, seven assists and six rebounds to help the Clippers sweep a back-to-back for the first time this season. They have won 10 of their last 13 games.

Keegan Murray led Sacramento with 17 points and Domantas Sabonis added 15 points and 10 rebounds. De'Aaron Fox had 14 points as Sacramento's two-game winning streak was snapped.

The Kings had won five of seven, including a win against Brooklyn on Monday night, but were overwhelmed by the Clippers from the second quarter on.

SUNS 119, WARRIORS 116

PHOENIX (AP)—Devin Booker scored 32 points, Bradley Beal added 16 in his return from a back injury and Phoenix held on late to beat Golden State.

Golden State's Draymond Green was ejected in the third quarter after receiving a Flagrant 2 foul for hitting Jusuf Nurkic in the face. Stephen Curry led the Warriors with 24 points.

The third quarter was marred when Green was ejected for the 18th time in his career, most among active NBA players.

Green and Nurkic were battling for position early in the third when the two got tangled. The Golden State forward appeared to slightly lose his balance, but then inexplicably wheeled around and smacked Nurkic in the face.

Nurkic immediately crumpled to the ground but eventually got up and stayed in the game. The referees reviewed the play before calling Green for a Flagrant 2 foul, which causes an automatic ejection.

NBA star Morant describes punching teen during a pickup basketball game last year

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—NBA star Ja Morant testified in court Monday that a teenager hit him in the face with a one-handed basketball pass at close range during a pickup game last year and that the Memphis Grizzlies guard punched the teen once in the face.

Morant said on the stand that the teen bumped him in the chest, balled his fists and got into a fighting stance. The lawsuit was filed by Joshua Holloway, who was 17 when the brief fight erupted at a basketball game on a court located at the Memphis-area home of the NBA All-Star's parents on July 26, 2022.

Holloway, now 18, accuses Morant and his close friend Davonte Pack of assault, reckless endangerment, abuse or neglect, and infliction of emotional distress. Morant, 24, has said that he and Pack each punched Holloway once, and that Pack's blow sent Holloway to the ground.

Morant claims he was acting in self-defense after Holloway threw the ball at him and hit him in the chin during a check-ball situation. A "check" is a common practice in pickup games in which two opposing players

pass the ball to each other and check to see if their teammates are ready, often before starting a game or after a foul.

The NBA player's lawyers argue that Morant is immune from liability under Tennessee's "stand your ground" law, which allows people who feel threatened at their homes to act with force in certain situations. The law is used in criminal cases, but Judge Carol Chumney's ruling last month cleared the way for Morant's lawyers to apply it in the civil case and attempt to have the lawsuit dismissed.

No criminal charges have been filed against Morant. Pack was charged with misdemeanor assault in July, but that charge has since been dropped.

The NBA suspended Morant for the first 25 games this season after a video of him flashing a handgun was posted online. The video shows Morant sitting in the passenger seat of a car and was posted after he finished serving an eight-game suspension in March for another video in which he displayed a handgun in a Denver-area strip club.

Morant apologized for both videos.

During Monday's hearing, Morant's father, Tee Morant,

testified that the family has for years invited young local basketball players and friends of Ja Morant to play on their full-sized home court. Morant's parents cook a meal for the players after the pickup games.

Holloway had been invited to play several times and had built a friendly relationship with the Morants. Ja Morant testified that the teen behaved well and showed respect to him and his family during his previous visits.

On the day of the fight, Holloway had been guarding Morant, who was dominating on offense and repeatedly led his team to victory during highly competitive games played throughout the day. Tee Morant testified that he was urging Holloway to play tough and "go at Ja," but that Holloway appeared frustrated and began "bickering back and forth" with Ja Morant.

During Morant's testimony, he reenacted the altercation with both his lawyer, Keenan Carter, and Holloway's lawyer, Rebecca Adelman. Both lawyers used basketballs they brought to the courtroom.

Ja Morant said he and Hol-

loway were facing each other in a check-ball situation to start a game. Morant testified that Holloway placed the ball on the ground in front of Ja Morant to start the check, rather than giving Morant a chest or bounce pass, which is customary.

Morant said he took that as a sign of disrespect and rolled the ball back to Holloway. The teen then rolled the ball back to Morant, who picked it up and threw a chest pass back to Holloway, Morant said.

That's when Holloway quickly threw a hard, one-handed pass with his right arm that hit Morant on the left side of his chin. Morant said he had his hands down and was surprised by the forceful pass, which hurt.

After he was hit in the face, Morant asked Holloway "What you on?" a phrase that Morant said meant: "What did you do that for?"

Holloway said nothing and did not apologize, Morant testified. The two then walked towards each other and stood chest-to-chest before Holloway shoulder-bumped Morant, pulled up his shorts by the waist and balled his fists, which Morant interpreted as a fighting stance.

"I thought he was about to hit me, so I swung first," Morant said.

After Morant's punch landed on Holloway's face, Pack then punched Holloway once in the head, knocking the teen to the ground, Morant said. Holloway was escorted from the court by former NBA player Mike Miller.

Adelman and Morant replayed the check ball situation, with Adelman firing the ball back at Morant, who caught it. At Adelman's request, Morant then outstretched his arm to show how he punched Holloway, his fist just inches from the lawyer's face.

"You could have pushed Joshua," Adelman said. "You could have talked to him, you could have mentored him, you could have said, 'Hey man, this isn't what we do here, leave my property.'"

Adelman then asked, "Were these options for you?"

"Yes," Morant said.

Later in her cross-examination, Adelman asked Morant if he was afraid that Holloway was going to hurt him.

"Yes," he said.

The hearing continues Tuesday.

Ohtani's contract has \$680M deferred, lowering tax value to \$46M annually

**N E W
Y O R K**
(A P) —

Shohei Ohtani will receive just \$20 million of his \$700 million contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers over the next 10 years, with \$680 million payable from 2034-43 in an unusual structure that gives the team greater payroll flexibility in coming seasons.

Ohtani's record-setting deal, agreed to Saturday, calls for annual salaries of \$70 million, according to details obtained by The Associated Press. Of each year's salary, \$68 million is deferred with no interest, payable in equal installments each July 1 from 2034-43.

For purposes of baseball's luxury tax, the contract is valued as a yearly addition to the Dodgers' payroll of about \$46 million. Under the collective bargaining agreement, for the calculation of a team's tax payroll the value of deferred money is discounted at the federal midterm rate. For all agreements this offseason, the discounting will be at the October 2023 rate of 4.43%.

Ohtani's deal includes a full no-trade provision and provides for a hotel suite on road trips, a premium luxury suite for home games and a fulltime interpreter.

A unique two-way superstar as both a hitter and pitcher, the 29-year-old Ohtani left the Los Angeles Angels as a free agent to sign with the Dodgers in a deal they announced Monday night.

"Dodger fans, thank you for welcoming me to your team," Ohtani said in a statement released by the club. "I can say 100 percent that you, the Dodger



baseball salary.

"On behalf of the L.A. Dodgers and our fans everywhere, we welcome Shohei Ohtani to the Dodgers, the home of Jackie Robinson, Sandy Koufax and Hideo Nomo, three of the sport's most legendary and path-breaking players," said Mark Walter, chairman of the Dodgers and Guggenheim Baseball. "Shohei is a once-in-a-generation talent and one of the most exciting professional athletes in the world."

Ohtani's total dollars are 64% higher than baseball's previous record, a \$426.5 million, 12-year deal for Angels outfielder Mike Trout that began in 2019.

His \$70 million average salary is 62% above the previous high of \$43,333,333, shared by pitchers Max Scherzer and Justin Verlander with deals they struck with the New York Mets. Ohtani's average salary nearly doubles the roughly \$42.3 million he earned with the Angels. It also exceeds the entire payrolls of Baltimore and Oakland this year.

However, for the luxury tax he will count only slightly more than Aaron Judge, who is a \$40 million annual charge to the Yankees' payroll as he enters the second season of a \$360 million, nine-year contract.

"Shohei Ohtani is a generational player and it was an honor to watch him make history throughout the six seasons he spent in an Angels uniform," the Angels posted on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

"We feel extremely fortunate that Angels fans were able to witness him redefine what is possible in our sport. We thank Shohei for his many contributions to our franchise and the game of baseball. We wish him the best during the next chapter of his career."

Zaidi: Giants made comparable offer to \$700M deal Ohtani received from Dodgers

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The San Francisco Giants made three offers to Shohei Ohtani, including a final proposal that president of baseball operations Farhan Zaidi called "very comparable if not identical" to the record \$700 million, 10-year contract the Japanese two-way star agreed to with the rival Los Angeles Dodgers.

Ohtani spent two hours with the Giants for a ballpark meeting with Zaidi, Greg Johnson, former catcher Buster Posey and new manager Bob Melvin on Dec. 2. Zaidi said San Francisco increased and adjusted its offers to meet Ohtani's requests.

"The proposal that was made was very comparable if not identical to what he wound up agreeing to," Zaidi said during a conference call Tuesday. "We offered what would have been

the biggest contract in major league history. I'm guessing we weren't the only team that did that. But wanted to show our aggressiveness and interest right out of the gate."

Zaidi said it might have been helpful to be able to take Ohtani around the San Francisco area to check out neighborhoods and real estate, but the meeting was restricted to Oracle Park to prevent Ohtani from being spotted.

When the Giants got the sense Ohtani seemed to want to stay in Southern California, Zaidi said there was a realization it might be a hard agreement to make happen despite the proposed financial commitment.

"And then we knew that would be a challenge for us," Zaidi said.

San Francisco's executives hadn't heard anything back

from Ohtani's representatives by Saturday morning, a few days after the club's latest offer. That became concerning to the Giants as the team waited for the player to make his choice.

The Giants missed out last offseason on Aaron Judge and then decided not to finalize a \$350 million, 13-year agreement with shortstop Carlos Correa after concerns arose from his physical dating to a 2014 surgery on his right leg.

When asked to specify whether the Giants' proposal was nearly equivalent to what Los Angeles offered, Zaidi noted, "Structure and total compensation, yes." He was given the indication all of Ohtani's offers were "in the similar range" by the end and the Giants tried to stay in contact to see what they might do to better their po-

sition in the pursuit.

Zaidi called it "an usual deal," given the significant deferred money involved.

"I think we at certain points felt really good about our chances, at other points as you always do, you have some questions or doubts because you know it's very competitive," Zaidi said.

"We felt like we pulled a number of levers to try to make things happen and there were ways in which I think we were disadvantaged just in terms of player preference, geography in particular, that the end of the day this is sort of what free agency is," he added. "It comes down to a choice for a player—and when you're talking about a generational player—is going to have great choices and probably be able to check just about every box he's looking for."

2040, when they will be due \$84 million.

By receiving the vast majority of the money when he presumably will not be living in the United States, Ohtani also figures to have a tax benefit. California's top tax rate for residents is 13.3%.

The two-time AL MVP has a string of endorsement deals that significantly add to his earnings beyond his

Pirates catcher Endy Rodríguez will miss 2024 season after undergoing right elbow surgery

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Pittsburgh Pirates catcher Endy Rodríguez will miss the entire 2024 season after undergoing reconstructive surgery on his right elbow.

The team announced Rodríguez had surgery Tuesday after he was injured taking a swing while playing in the Dominican Republic. The estimated recovery time is 10-12 months.

The 23-year-old Rodríguez is considered a major part of the Pirates' future after making his major league debut in July. He hit .220 with three home

runs and 13 RBIs in 57 games.

Rodríguez is a work in progress as a receiver but did throw out nine of 30 potential base stealers.

The Pirates had expected Rodríguez to take on the bulk of the catching load in 2024. Now, they'll likely turn to former top overall draft pick Henry Davis, Jason Delay and perhaps recently signed Ali Sanchez behind the plate.

Davis spent most of his 2023 rookie season playing right field. Sanchez signed a one-year deal with Pittsburgh on Dec. 1.

Legends, Bourbon escape with wins in B division caging

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR



Team Legends and Bourbon Bar & Grill beat their opponents in the Pacific Saipan Inc. Promo Invitational Basketball League by the skin of their teeth last Tuesday at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

In the first game, Team Legends squeaked past Maplas, 58-57, after Ronald Rueda missed two free throws in the dying seconds that would've given his team the lead.

Before that Maplas virtually led a tight game against Team Legends with Rueda spearheading their campaign.

Maplas had a 3-point lead after the opening quarter, 16-13, and rested at halftime clinging to a 2-point lead, 32-30. They would add another



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bourbon Bar & Grill players pose for a group photo after their win against Maplas in the Pacific Saipan Inc. Promo Invitational Basketball League last Tuesday at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

basket to their advantage at the end of the third, 44-40.

"Smoking" Jun Tabora, however, had other plans and scattered 6 of his game-high 23 points to help Team Legends rally in the end to edge Maplas.

Jimboy Tabora paced his uncle with 17 points in the low-scoring contest for the now league-leading 5-1 team.

The 19 points of Rueda and 8 markers of Rommel Usi led Maplas, which dropped to 4-2.

And speaking of low-scoring games, Bourbon Bar & Grill and Guardians totaled a lesser score in the second game that nearly followed the same script as the first game.

Bourbon Bar & Grill led Guardians after each quarter,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Team Legends players pose for a group photo after their win against Guardians in the Pacific Saipan Inc. Promo Invitational Basketball League last Tuesday at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court

taking a 13-12 advantage after the first 10 minutes of play and 23-21 at intermission.

Jaypee Jose then fired 6 of his 10 points in the third quarter to suddenly give Bourbon Bar & Grill a relatively comfortable 41-34 lead heading into the payoff period.

Guardians, however, made a game of it in the fourth and

final quarter as Darwin Gonzales and Erwin Lumanlan combined for 11 points.

Luckily for Bourbon Bar & Grill, Paul John Manansala came to the rescue with the marginal basket allowing them to escape with the 2-point victory.

Marlon Binuya and July Narciso top-scored for Bourbon Bar & Grill with 12 and 11 markers, respectively. Guardians, which dropped to 4-2 in

a tie with their conquerors, had Manuel Gatbonton and Jerome Directo lead the way with 11 points apiece.

First Game

Team Legends 58 – Ju. Tabora 23, Ji. Tabora 17, Tibayan 7, Ege 5, Zapata 3, Ebuen 2, Discartin 2.

Maplas 57 – Rueda 19, Usi 9, Odicita 8, Ma. Tagle 4, Claveria 3, Castro 2, Austria 2, Mo. Tagle 2.

Scoring by quarters: 13-16, 30-32, 40-44, 58-57.

Second Game

Bourbon Bar & Grill 53 – Binuya 12, Narciso 11, Jose 10, Manansala 6, Gragasin 4, Guinhawa 4, Vallo 4, Francisco 2.

Guardians 51 – Gatbonton 11, Directo 11, Gonzales 8, Didulo 7, Lumanlan 5, Agbanlog 4, Dela Cruz 2, Peredo 2.

Scoring by quarters: 13-12, 23-21, 41-34, 53-51.

CNMI

From page 20

Guam Muay Thai Boxing's Patterson Joseph

■ Trench Tech's Phil "Prime Time" Gregorio vs. independent fighter Angelo Pulido

■ MCAMMA/PRIME-VIL's Gunzy Tomei vs. Trench Tech's BengBeng "The Dengdeng" Palacios

■ Independent fighter Javen Montenegro vs. Trench Tech's Drey Aldan

■ MCAMMA/PRIME-VIL's Dillon J. Pomdi vs. Trench Tech's Keith "Rowdy Rebel" Aldan

■ Team Undisputed's Jesse "The Inferno" Colisao vs. Guam Muay Thai's Knightly Soulik

■ Team Undisputed's "Tabi" Jay Mula vs. Trench Tech's

CJ Hofschneider

■ Independent fighter Leo Tenorio vs. Trench Tech's Audiscott Iakopo

■ Trench Tech's Jimmy "Crazy Ray" Polk vs. Team MCAMMA/Primevil's Justin Agulto

■ Mauler Boxing's Glaine "Saipan Mauler" Cepeda vs. Trench Tech's Mameeto Iakopo

■ RM Sports' Jerome Carriaga vs. Latte Built's Josh Soccoro

■ MCAMMA/PRIMEVIL's Saips Thuy vs. Trench Tech's Nosh Demapan

■ Mauler Boxing Club's Gren "Hitman" Cepeda vs. RM Sports' Mathew Moriano

■ Guam Muay Thai's John Lee vs. Trench Tech's "Shot-Gun" Mike Camacho

■ Maule Boxing Club's Jamaal Mresbang vs. Trench

Tech's Ram Lee

■ Guam Muay Thai's Isaac Crisostomo vs. Trench Tech's EJ Nekaifes

■ "TBBB" Jose Camacho vs. CK Krazy Kids' Nelson Saimon

■ Independent fighters Antwon Indelacio vs. John Enriquez

■ Guam Muay Thai's Jere-

miah "J-Comp" Taitingfong vs. Latte Built Gym's Bonnie "The Hitman" Sagana

"Ring of Fire" is sponsored by Miller Lite, Century Hotel, and Hafa Adai Rent-A-Car. Doors open at 5pm and the first match kicks off at 6pm. Tickets are on sale at Boarderline for \$25 and \$30 at the door.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Guam's Muay Thai Team, from left, Paterson Joseph, Jake Albert, Sam Emanuel, Jeremiah Taitingfong, Isaac Crisostomo, and John Lee.

UNDEFEATED

From page 20

High School Gymnasium.

It was back-and-forth match between GCA and MCS as they were evenly matched with an undefeated record each before their game. It was close throughout the first few points with GCA never too far behind a one- or two-point lead by MCS, but GCA made a few costly mistakes that led to a 17-12 MCS lead.

MCS' Anjoelena Villagomez led the charge with her hard-hitting spikes and overhead serves, but a change in momentum came by way of GCA's Llyana Libut, who took control and gave her team a much needed boost to comeback city.

By the end of her service, Libut brought them all the way home and stole the first set away from a stunned MCS team to come from behind and win, 21-19.

The second set came much easier for the Lady Eagles as

they've established their ground against a once confident Lady Knights team. GCA quickly had a commanding 4-0 lead which expanded to 7-2.

Libut, the Lady Eagles' main setter, also assisted not only from her serves, but also by setting up well placed plays to teammates Eliane Pagaduan and Aiyana Fatialofa who capitalized and ensured less returns by MCS.

Trouble at the boundary lines brewed as some points were either overruled or contested, but the show went on and MCS just couldn't catch anymore up to the growing GCA lead.

MCS tried to mount a comeback like what GCA did in the first set—coming from 10-17 to 13-17, but they later conceded, 15-21, and was handed their first loss of the season for a 5-1 record.

The Lady Eagles include Libut, Fatialofa, Pagaduan, Neveah Camacho, Eliane Pagaduan, Aiyana Fatialofa, Wylynn Pua, Guadalupe Vil-

lagomez, Sarah Lim, Keala Takeda, and Jojo Yarofalir.

MCS was made up of Villagomez, Cassidee Flores, Aubrey Quitugua, Alexia Rubia, Mia Guerrero, Heather Sin, Miaria Dela Cruz, Ciana Demapan, Janessa Arriola, Ava Sablan, Cali Cabrera, and Trisha Abuan.

In other results that night, Hopwood Middle School II defeated MCS II, 21-9, 21-18; DanDan Middle School II beat ChaCha Ocean View Middle School II in three tough sets, 21-12, 21-14.

The last games of 2023 were played last Tuesday, but results weren't available at press time.

One more regular season game is scheduled next year, Jan. 9, before the start of the championship round from Jan. 11 to Jan. 13.



LEIGH GASES

Grace Christian Academy Lady Eagles' Llyana Libut goes for a backwards return against Mount Carmel School Lady Knights in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls Middle School Volleyball League 2023-2024 last Monday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.



Despite finishing all the way down in seventh place, Tony Deleon Guerrero won the Saipan Golf Association 2023 November Ace of the Month Tournament last Nov. 12 at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort east course.

Deleon Guerrero finished with a net score of 79 after his 96 gross was shaved off by his handicap 17.

The six players that had lower scores than him already won a monthly tournament and under SGA rules were ineligible to take home the monthly plum, thus giving the November ace on a silver platter to Deleon Guerrero.

Larry Deleon Guerrero actually fired the lowest score of the day with his net 68, followed by Das Krishnan's net 69, Attorney General Edward Manibusan and Ed Sablan's identical net

72s, Mariano Fajardo's 74, and Joe Sablan's net 76.

In the closest to the pin, Ray San Nicholas was without peer in hole No. 4, Ray San Nicholas was the best in hole No. 6, while Larry Deleon Guerrero and John Matsumoto ruled holes No. 11 and 15, respectively.

Best friends Rick Kautz and Nick Sablan brought the lumber and won the longest drives in holes No. 2 and 18, respectively.

With the win last month, Tony Deleon Guerrero now joins other SGA 2023 Ace of Aces Tournament qualifiers Ray S. Salas (January), Das Krishnan (February), Joe I. Sablan (March), Rick Kautz (April), Nick C. Sablan (May), Tony S. Reyes (June), Larry I. Deleon Guerrero (July), Edward C. Sablan (August), Edward Manibusan (September), and Mariano Fajardo (October).

The 2023 SGA Ace of Aces is proposed for one day only on Dec. 17, 2023 with venue and time still to be announced.

MATANSA

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power and won, 7-2.

MP United drew first blood in the 18th minute for a 1-0 lead, but that was all they could muster until later into the second half.

Meanwhile, the assault on MP United's goal started in the 24th minute by SUFC's Pia Ngewakl, followed by back-to-back goals by Rosie Saralu at the start of the second half.

Ngewakl completed the hat-trick in the 50th minute, and was complemented in between

by a goal from Tamia Hix. At this point, MP United has drawn blanks and has not been able to penetrate SUFC's goal.

MP United's last hurrah came in the 55th minute by Matty Angeles, only to be overshadowed by SUFC's 7th and final goal just a minute later.

The Golden Boot award for the most goals of the season went to Rosie Saralu with 22 goals in the U17 girls division; the Golden Boot award in the U17 boys division went to Kanoa's Markus Toves who scored 15 goals.



Tatum,
Brown both
drop 25 as
Celtics top
Cavaliers.

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Legends,
Bourbon
escape with
wins in B
division caging.

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20 THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2023

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Matansa, SUFC bag U17 soccer titles



By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Matansa bagged the U17 boys championship, while Southern United Football Club claimed the U17 girls title after the finals of the TakeCare Youth Soccer League Fall 2023 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Saturday.



Matansa successfully kicked one more goal against Latte FC to cement their championship, 3-2. Wataru Kado-

kura immediately made it a 2-0 game by the 19th minute, but Latte's Isiah Barcina got a foothold on the ball a couple minutes later to make it 2-1.

Latte pushed many times toward Matansa's goal only to



Matansa's U17 boys team poses with their championship trophy after their TakeCare Youth Soccer League Fall 2023 finals against Southern United FC last Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

come up short each time. This allowed Matansa to score an insurance goal in the 40th minute and put them up by two. Matansa held onto their two-goal lead until Barcina found the net again in the 56th minute.

Matansa's extra goal proved

crucial as they bagged the win after Latte was unable to tie or overtake the lead.

In the U17 girls game between SUFC and MP United, SUFC had a more consistent and accurate fire-

See MATANSA on Page 19

Undefeated GCA leads MS v-ball

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



Defending NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls Middle School Volleyball League champs Grace Christian Academy Lady Eagles breezed undefeated through

the 2023-2024 regular season.

The Lady Eagles laid to waste each opponent for a 7-0 record. GCA then came back to win in two sets their last game before the holiday break after a shaky start against erstwhile undefeated Mount Carmel School Lady Knights last Monday at the Marianas

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Grace Christian Academy Lady Eagles' Neveah Camacho spikes over a Mount Carmel School player during their regular season game of the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls Middle School Volleyball League 2023-2024 last Monday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

CNMI vs. Guam in 'Ring of Fire' main event

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



Two days left before the fiery debut of Trench Warz Promotions' "Ring of Fire"

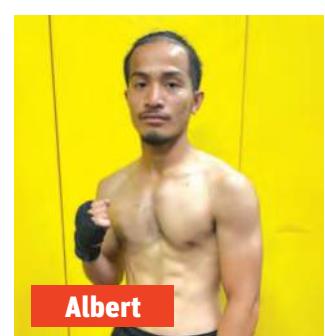
boxing and kickboxing events that's set for Saturday, Dec. 16 at the Garapan Central Park Round House.

The incendiary main event is between Trench Tech's Andres "Tanapag Beach Bad Boy" Camacho and Guam Muay Thai's Sam "The Tank" Emmanuel.

The co-main event of Trench Tech's Stanley "The Raging Bull" Iakopo and Guam Muay Thai's Sam "The Tank" Emmanuel.

The 140-lb Camacho said he expects the matchup to be a "firefight." The U.S. Marine

The 23-year-old added he



Albert



Camacho

said he believes he can beat Albert with his "striking skills and that he won't be able to keep up with my cardio."

As this is his boxing debut, he doesn't have a record, but is 3-3 in MMA bouts.

The 23-year-old added he

trains like he always does, "As if it was for a championship."

For the 135-lb Albert, one of Guam's top boxers, he said that this is his first main event. "I just want to show my skills, give my best. For sure it will be a good match," he said. His prediction of the match: "We'll just see how it goes."

The 24-year-old has a 3-0 record but said, "it doesn't really count because it has to be on [a] boxing passport which Guam doesn't offer."

The rest of the fight card as of yesterday morning are as follows:

■ Mauler Boxing Club's Edryan "The Sniper" Bayot vs.

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